



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

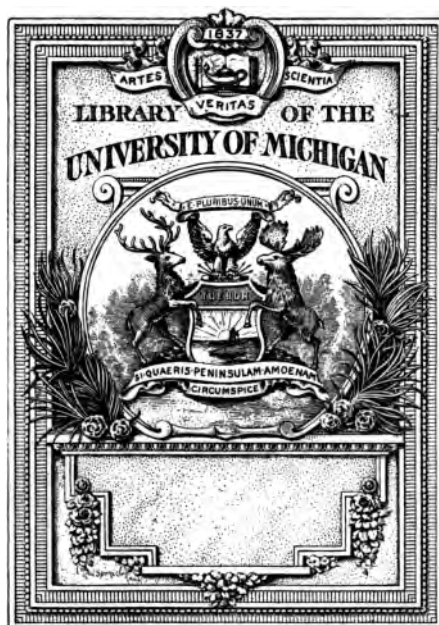
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

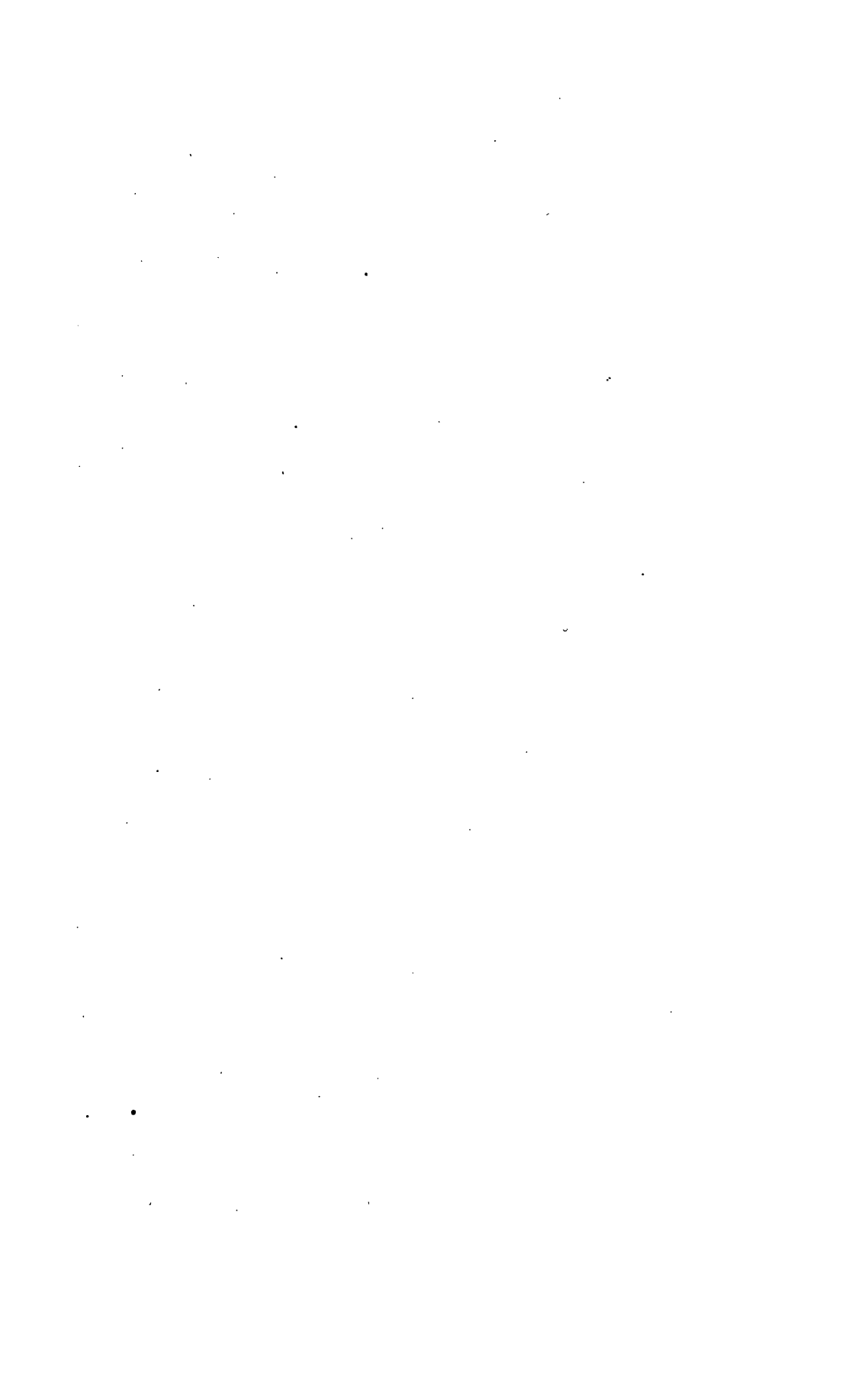
B

954,399









T47

YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

ALBERT S. COOK, EDITOR

XX

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN
THE PURITANS AND
THE STAGE

Received
ELBERT N. S. THOMPSON, PH.D.

Instructor in English in Lehigh University

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Yale University in Candidacy for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1903

Copyright, 1903,
by
ELBERT N. S. THOMPSON

PREFACE

The precise relations between morality and art have never been determined. Although each age has grappled with the problem, an abiding solution has never been reached. Especially is this true if morality has won the ascendancy. Since it is invariably a false art that is responsible for such a triumph, the ascendancy of morality can remain unquestioned only so long as that art, which must soon perish, endures. Later generations, forgetful of its ephemeral existence, look back only upon the true art remaining, and wonder how mankind could ever have been so prudish. So it has befallen the solution reached by the English Puritan. The world has grown to respect so highly and so justly the unparalleled literary production of Elizabethan England—the work of Shakspeare, Jonson, Marlowe, and the rest—that it has forgotten the lower manifestations of the same inspiring force, and the vital problems presented by them to both moralists and legislators. The natural tendency, therefore, has been for the world to wonder at the stupidity of the Puritan. Here, as in all similar cases, it is only by studying the art of the age in its widest sense, and by reviving its social environment, that we can fully grasp the situation. This I have tried to do in my study of Puritan opinions. And in so doing, I have, perhaps, reached somewhat different conclusions from what a hasty judgment would have warranted. Yet my feelings toward the real literary art of the Elizabethan age remain unchanged. Though I regard more sympathetically the Puritans' espousal of the cause of morality, I can still rejoice that their cause did not triumph—and there is really more than chance at bottom of it—till the work of our greatest dramatists was done.

My bibliography includes the titles of all works from which I have derived any material help, and on reference to those titles the abbreviated references of the footnotes will become clear. No mention, however, has been made of the work of Symmes, *Les Débuts de la Critique Dramatique en Angleterre jusqu' à la Mort de Shakespeare* Paris, 1903, which came into my hands after the completion of my study. Both in purpose and scope this book differs from mine. It is chiefly valuable for its contribution of three hitherto unknown criticisms of the drama. His work I have reviewed at length for the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the English professors of Yale University for the encouragement and assistance that they have given me in the course of this work.

E. N. S. T

New Haven, Connecticut,
August 15, 1903.

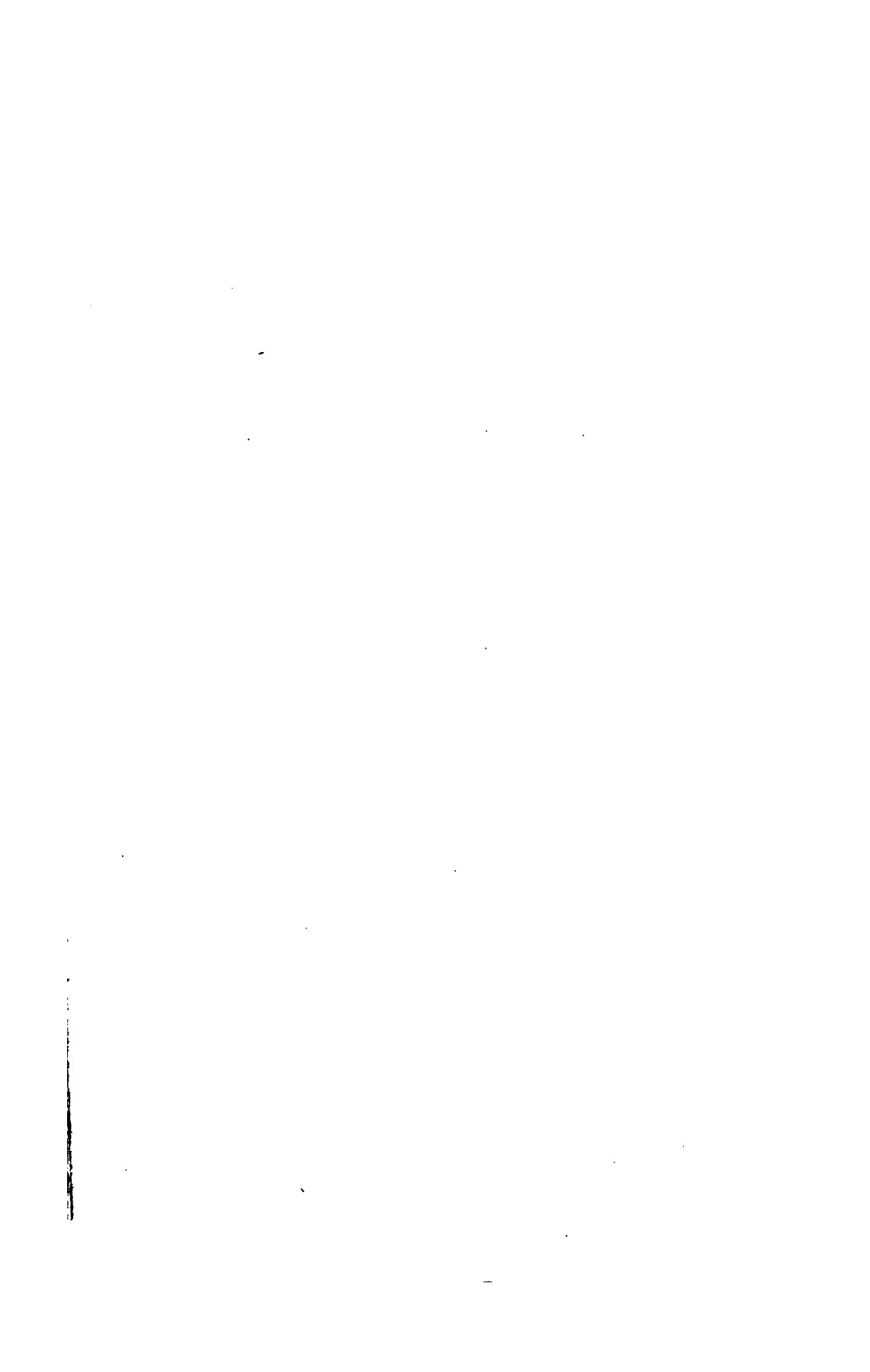
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I. THE PURITAN ATTACK ON THE STAGE

	Page
Chapter 1. Plato and the Fathers,	9
Chapter 2. English Sentiment against the Stage, previous to the Establishment of Regular Theaters, . .	27
(a) Early Church Sentiment,	27
(b) Early English Hostility of Native Growth,	31
(c) Causes of the Growth of this English Feeling, . .	33
(d) Evidence of early Elizabethan Objection to the Stage, in Legislation and in Literature,	40
(e) This Sentiment was maturing, but still moderate, .	48
Chapter 3. Northbrooke, the Leader of the Active Cam- paign,	54
Chapter 4. The Heat of the Controversy.—The Gosson- Lodge Debate,	62
Chapter 5. Philip Stubbes,	80
Chapter 6. Minor Aspects of the Controversy of these Years,	86
Chapter 7. The Academic Dispute,	93
Chapter 8. The Theological Attack,	102
Chapter 9. Indications of Public Sentiment, with further Causes for its Growth,	108
Chapter 10. Legislation on the Stage; 1576-1603, . . .	119
Chapter 11. Summary; 1576-1603,	126
Chapter 12. The Period of Calm,	128
Chapter 13. Renewal of the Literary Contest,	134
Chapter 14. Feeling behind this later Literary Campaign, .	146
Chapter 15. William Prynne,	159
Chapter 16. Closing Years of the Controversy,	179
Chapter 17. Conclusion,	186

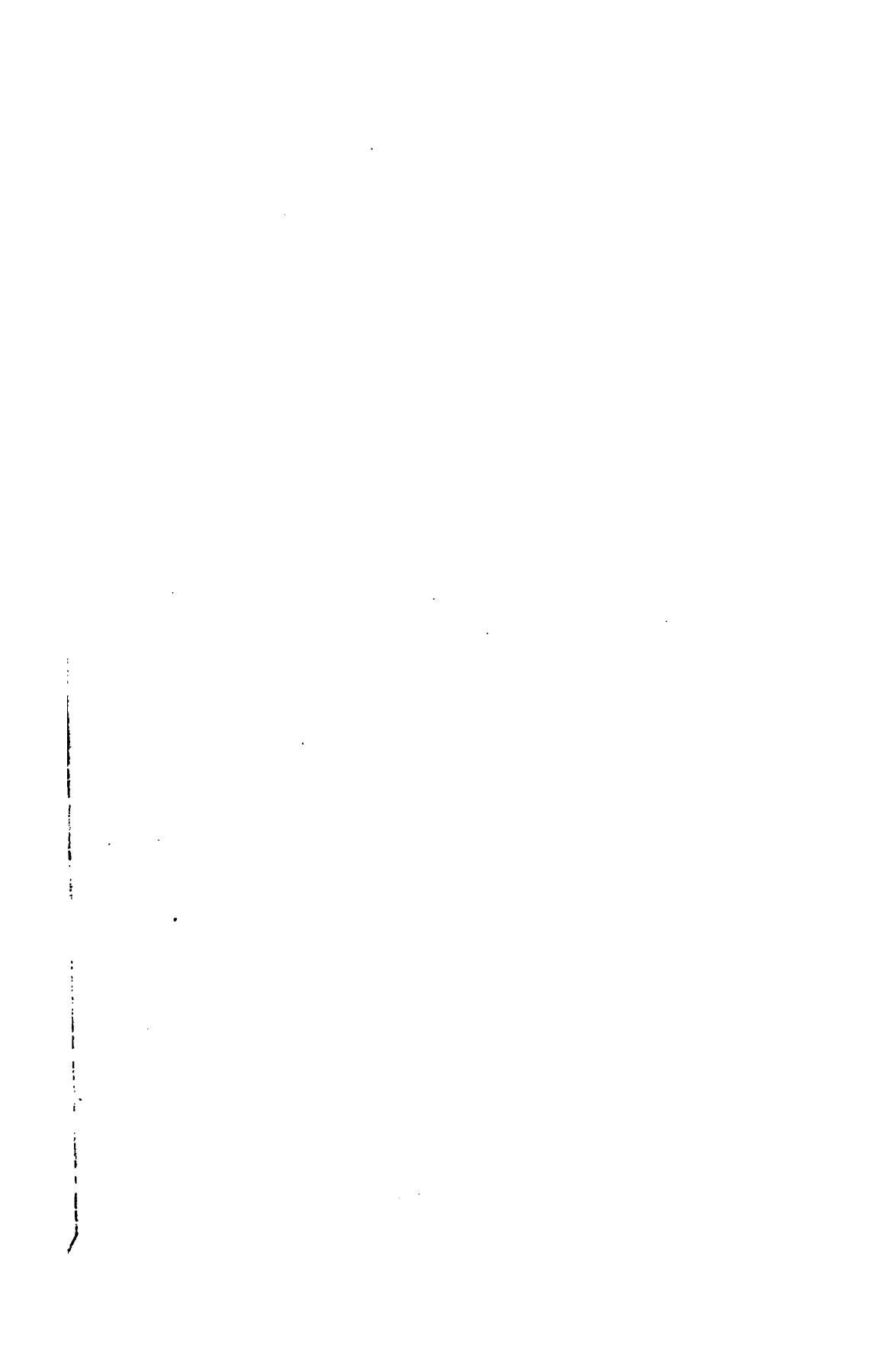
PART II. THE DRAMATISTS' REPLY TO THE PURITANS

Chapter 1. The Actors and the Martinists,	195
Chapter 2. Main Characteristics of the Dramatists' Reply, .	205
Chapter 3. Review of the Dramatists' Reply,	247
Conclusion,	260



PART I

THE PURITAN ATTACK ON THE STAGE



CHAPTER 1.

PLATO AND THE FATHERS.

A study which is to treat of a phase of English thought not indigenous alone to the British Isle, nor even restricted to one historic period, may fittingly seek, for preliminary exposition, a meaning in the word Puritan broader in its connotation than that assigned it by history. Puritanism in essence is the effort to rid life, or some phase of it, of the evils that have enwrapped it. It matters not whether it be to free a religion of forms that seem to impede the soul in its worship, or whether it be to wipe away the stains of social life. That is Puritanism, whatever variations it may assume at different times and at different places, which seeks to obtain the fullest possible conception of the divine idea in the world, and to make that idea rule. The following of the divine plan in the ordering of thought and of conduct may be done consciously or unconsciously. It may even be found silently leavening the teachings of great pagans like Plato. And like all human endeavors it may, and usually does, take on a sectarian view, and bind its followers to a narrow ideal of life, and even to intolerant judgment of their fellows. This shriveled manifestation of the spirit of Puritanism must be considered in any treatment of the subject, but it must not be regarded as the true spirit. In opposing false beauty and license, it may inspire in its adherents a distrust and even abhorrence of the finer, though abused, feelings of the soul, yet this is only the accidental result, not the life-purpose of Puritanism. For it brings no necessary break with true beauty and freedom; and those lofty natures who, though steadfast to their faith, nourished a love for art, are more truly Puritans than the type of gloomy ascetics usually classed under that name. These higher men are found in all ages and in all stations of life; Plato was of them, and the æsthetic, beauty-wor-

shipping Spenser, the Roundhead poet and statesman Milton, the royalist Sidney, and the churchman Herbert; and wherever they appear they should stand for what they are—in the highest and noblest sense Puritans.

The study of the Puritan attitude toward the stage should follow these broad lines. But limitation, it is needless to say, is necessary. We are not here to quarrel with terms defined strictly by history, or to force under one standard men actually affiliated under another. We expect to restrict our study in point of time and space to the real historical era of Puritanism; but we hope not to restrict it in spirit. So when we shall find that men, not only in olden times but even in England itself, in no wise connected with the reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries, stood with them in their opposition to theatrical exhibitions, their influence should not be entirely excluded from consideration. If this broader horizon is kept clearly in sight, restriction in other ways will be no hindrance. By so grasping the real truth and purpose of the movement as it manifested itself in the narrow field of England, and even there as centered in the one city, London, within the few years closing the 16th and opening the 17th centuries, the principle of all similar movements against the stage will be realized. How could it be otherwise? English Puritanism was no radical, arbitrary revolution, the outbreak of fanaticism; it was a deepening and broadening by natural and steady growth of the nation's moral nature, begun in those first struggles against the clerical abuses of pre-Reformation times, and continued with no interruption till the second half of the 17th century. In essentials, therefore, it must have been similar to other spiritual awakenings fostered under like conditions; it must have contained the energizing force of all.

Our idea, therefore, is to trace the warfare carried on by the English Puritans from the time when their opposition first assumed prominence in the middle of the 16th century till their temporary victory was won in 1642. Yet that the accidental and peculiar aspects of this movement may be

separated from the fundamental principles involved, we may well look at two earlier periods when dignified, well-meaning and well-grounded opposition to the dramatic art grew to be a vital issue, by comparison and contrast with which the English movement will appear in a new and clearer light.

In the earlier of the periods to which we accordingly invite attention, it was the art of Greece that was attacked. Hellenic culture, in spite of its fostering of high intellectualism and artistic susceptibility, did little to strengthen man's moral nature, and in the end its art sank from glory to utter degradation. Wise men among the people saw the inherent insufficiency of their religion, and dimly, the end to which art was guiding them. Xenophanes, about 538 B.C., pierced the fallacy of polytheism, and censured Homer for this, as well as for his stories of the Olympian deities; and his pupil, Heracleitus, thought that Homer and the other poets should have been "whipped out of the state with rods." This feeling reached its culmination a century later in the poet-philosopher Plato. In ancient Athens poetry was given the place held to-day both by religion and education; and by the founder of an ideal commonwealth the propriety of this system had to be considered. Hence Plato was led to the attack. He believed that poetry failed signally as a fit training for youth. By arousing artificially sympathy and emotion that should respond only to genuine grief, it weakened human character. Passions thus awakened, whether of grief at tragedy or mirth at comedy, he believed gradually altered and lowered character to a simulated being unworthy of true manhood. The moral objection lay still deeper. Poets, even the greatest of them, had taught that might made right, and had invented slanderous fictions about the gods, and by their stories of Hades had brought men to fear even an honorable death. Thus poetry at its best had been in Greece a bane to youth, and hence to the state—especially tragic poetry with its call for a complete surrender of individuality to imitation. Indeed, since all imitative art is twice removed from truth—being

but an imitation of something in itself only a faulty copy of God's original and true idea—its innate falsity, in Plato's mind, was sufficient to ruin human understanding and to blind it to the truth.

No more extreme position against art could well be taken. Plato, to be sure, recognized various degrees of the corrupting influence. Homer, from whom he illustrated all his objections, seemed less objectionable than the untruthful versifiers of his own time. But on the whole he did not oppose high to low art; rather he classed both together to contrast with philosophy, which, instead of describing superficially the mere aspect of things, sought the real principles underlying external phenomena. This was the basis of his quarrel.

Yet Sidney in his *Defense of Poetry* asserted that Plato spoke of the abuse, not the use, of art, assailed only "those wrong opinions of the Deity," and in the *Ion* gave "high and rightly divine commendation unto poetry." Although in that work Plato's praise was half ironical, other passages show that Sidney was not wholly astray from the truth. In the *Republic*, Plato said that if dramatists must represent man's actions, at least let them hasten over the necessary evil in dialogue, and so leave the action free for the portrayal of the good. Again, he said that the only fitting themes for poetry were religion and patriotism—a seeming admission that poetry could be rightly used.¹ In fact, Plato did conceive of an artistic form so perfect that it raised itself from falsity to truth in becoming the sincere voice of the inner life.² One sees, therefore, that it was only Plato's great moral nature, awakened to consciousness of the evil, that finally triumphed over his poetic instincts and led him to banish poetry from his ideal state.

Strange Plato's ideas now seem; yet he did not stand alone. Plutarch accepted them, at least in part,³ and in the late Middle Ages Agrippa could say: "And thus

¹ *Republic*, III, 79-83; *Laws*, V, 210-11.

² *Republic*, III, sect. 401-2.

³ See chapter 15, p. 173.

the best and wisest of men have always despised poesy as the parent of lies."¹ If such doubts were inspired in pagans by the evils of poetry, especially of the drama, it is not surprising that the leaders of the early Christian church should have headed a crusade similar in many respects to Plato's, though more evangelistic in aim. Their standpoint followed naturally from their belief. At the rise of Christianity art had sunk to its lowest in Hellas, and was working the ruin which Plato had foreseen; while in Rome the brutality of the gladiatorial combats, and the extreme realism of barbarity and lust presented on the stage, forced a natural revolt in every human heart. For sunk though the people were in morals, and fond as they were of these scenes of vice, enough sense of good was left in them at least to realize the evil. Men like Horace, Propertius and even Ovid saw clearly the loathsomeness of the spectacles. Yet being destitute of Christian inspiration, they made few attempts to remedy the evil, or uplift the actors. The furthest that an emperor even of Marcus Aurelius' temperament dared go against the games was to lessen the salaries of the actors;² and what restrictive laws were passed, in the face of a universal passion, did little to lessen the great influence undermining the state. It was left for the Christian church to assume the true Puritan attitude—an utter condemnation of plays, and scorn for the players, together with an earnest attempt to uproot the evil, and to raise the actors from their social degradation.

The attitude of the ante-Nicene church may be regarded in many ways as a re-echo or survival of Plato's spirit. In the second century Tatian described the actor as a man who "is one thing internally, but outwardly counterfeits what he is not."³ And at approximately the same time, Tertullian, with his treatise *De Spectaculis* really leading the attack against the Roman games, spoke at greater length to the same effect. "The Author of truth," he said, "hates

¹ *Vanity of Sciences*, chapter 4.

² Schmidt, p. 430.

³ *Address to the Greeks*, p. 28.

all the false; He regards as adultery all that is un-^{re} condemning, therefore, as He does hypocrisy in ever^{er} form, He never will approve any putting on of voice, ^o sex, or age; He never will approve pretended loves, an^o wraths, and groans, and tears."¹ Both Tertullian and Tatian, however, introduced much of the more strict^{ly} Christian teaching. Tertullian admitted that play-houses were made from the fruits of God's handiwork, but denied that the materials were intended for any such use; he admitted that plays were nowhere specifically forbidden in the Scriptures, but showed how contrary they were to the first verse of the Psalms, and to Christ's life and teaching. From this he reasoned that the Roman games were not "consistent with true religion, and true obedience to the true God."² Tertullian was speaking to a company of Christians about to draw near to God in worship and communion; consequently his main concern was to prove this utter inconsistency. All public spectacles, in his opinion, were based on idolatry. This was shown not merely by history, but also by the very names of the festivals, and, in the case of circus games, by the images and chariots in the gorgeous processions.³ Hence all were included among those pomps of the Devil renounced by Christians in baptism. No proviso was made in favor of any class of games. Tertullian expressly stated, "It may be grand or mean, no matter, any circus procession whatever is offensive to God. Though there be few images to grace it, there is idolatry in one; though there be no more than a single sacred car, it is a chariot of Jupiter: anything of idolatry whatever, whether meanly arrayed or modestly rich and gorgeous, taints it in its origin." This last clause applied the words to games and exhibitions in general; for unhesitatingly the author affirmed that the theater had "a common origin with the circus," and bore "like idolatrous designations."⁴ Thus we see how Christianity, in the days when paganism was still strong in the world, was forced to a position more

¹ p. 30.² p. 8.³ p. 12-15.⁴ p. 15, 18.

extreme in its condemnation than that of the few isolated pagans who felt the falsity of art.

It was no mere spirit of rivalry between the doctrines of the two religions, no mere sectarianism, that so moved the Fathers. Against the vices of paganism Christianity stood for truth, purity and brotherly love, irreconcilably opposed, therefore, to Rome's scenic exhibitions. They were filled with the grossest impurity, and Tertullian proceeded logically from the idolatry of plays to their moral depravity. Since in the theater, "immodesty's own peculiar abode, where nothing is in repute but what elsewhere is disreputable," the forbidden excitements are roused to the highest pitch in the audience, plays must be evil.¹ It is hardly necessary to quote his picture of the obscenity of the Roman stage, since his thought can easily be gained by analysis. If every idle word is forbidden by God, surely the impious words of actors must be almost unpardonable; if it is prohibited under all circumstances to wear woman's garments, then surely the "vileness . . . which the buffoon in woman's clothes exhibits" is an utter abomination; and "if tragedies and comedies are the bloody and wanton, the impious and licentious inventors of crimes and lusts," as he thought them, they must be as evil as the deeds which they devise.²

Tertullian was not one to temporize or trifle with sin. From his principle, "Never and nowhere is that free from blame which God ever condemns; never and nowhere is it right to do what you may not do at all times and in all places," there was possible but one conclusion to the treatise.³ Extreme his position may seem, but amply justified by the world around him; the Puritan heart feels a willingness to sacrifice everything in order that God's will may prevail on earth, and this Tertullian possessed. But lest his conception of the Christian life should seem forbidding, he closed his appeal with a picture of its joys. "If the literature of the stage delight you, we have literature

¹ p. 24.² p. 25.³ p. 27.

in abundance of our own. . . . Would you have also fightings and wrestlings? Well, of these there is no lacking, and they are not of slight account. Behold unchastity overcome by chastity, perfidy slain by faithfulness, cruelty stricken by compassion, impudence thrown into the shade by modesty: these are the contests we have among us, and in these *we* win our crowns. But would you have something of blood too? You have Christ's."¹

Thus at the very beginning, the opposition of Christianity to the stage was felt in all its force and completeness. The danger was so apparent and so real that no time was necessary for a slow maturing of sentiment. We have taken the words of Tertullian to represent the general feeling of the church of the second and succeeding centuries against secular games; because he, the father of Christian Latin literature and the Saint Paul of the second century, with his practical wisdom, his evangelical fervor and his earnest piety, exerted such a power on the minds of his successors.

Tertullian's work was carried on in the next century by his loving admirer Cyprian, whose treatise on the public exhibitions, modeled throughout on its predecessor, closed with the same picture of the joys of the Christian life. From that author one passage is well worth quoting. "It is the tragic buskin," he said, "which relates in verse the crimes of ancient days, . . . so that, as the ages pass by, any crime that was formerly committed may not be forgotten."² Lactantius, in the same century, held as extreme a position as Tertullian. After enumerating the lewd themes of comedy, he asserted: "The more eloquent they are who have composed the accounts of these disgraceful actions, the more do they persuade by the elegance of their sentiments."³ And from a single passage in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, we see how manifold and how varied were the objections brought against the drama—the waste of time and money involved, the confusion and

¹ p. 34.

² *Epistle to Donatus*, I, 6-7.

³ *Divine Institutes*, I, 408; II, 148.

disorder filling the theater, the iniquity arising there from the shameless words and acts of the players and from the close mingling of men and women in the throng.¹ Gradually the Fathers had come in the third century to paint more in detail the lusts of the theater.

Thus far the protest had come from a despised sect, having neither social rank nor legal sanction in the community. But after the terrible days of the Diocletian persecution, after the year 312 when Constantine granted to Christianity its first recognition, and removed the burdens from its ministers, the condition of affairs greatly changed. As long as Christians had been outcasts hunted by Roman hirelings, their band was free from cowards and impostors, and their path ran apart from the pagans. But when those dark days passed away, hypocrites crept into the fold, and with them came selfishness and luxury; and as Christians left their seclusion in the catacombs and lived among men, they came into close communication with the pagan society around them. Though their influence, then, was good, on society and legislation, they in turn became tainted by that association, and the weaker ones, tempted once more by the corrupt games, sank back into the old vices from which the new faith had called them. What wonder, then, that in this fourth century the attacks on the theater were redoubled, or that the fervency of the Fathers' warnings increased! More than ever before plays were manifestly the very pomps of the Devil, renounced by Christians in baptism; and any yielding to their siren call was apostacy,

We need take at length but two of the Fathers to illustrate the spirit of this time. Augustine pleaded unceasingly against all public spectacles. He records in his *Confessions* how plays at a critical period of his youth raised in him false and foolish passions, and—a re-echo of Plato—what evil he sustained in school from the study of poetic fictions and from the enforced discipline of reproducing their feigned passion.² His *Soliloquies* testify to his sense of

¹ *The Instructor*, III, 326-7.

² Book III, 1; I. 12-17; also *City of God*, II, 8.

the falseness of a life spent in acting other thoughts and feelings than one's own.¹ But his main plea against plays was on the score of idolatry. Although the Christian religion was firmly established when the *De Civitate Dei* appeared, paganism was still of sufficient strength to strive for a full century later to win back its apostates and to uproot the new faith. Consequently, in the *De Civitate Dei* the intimate connection of all scenic games with pagan worship is argued to its utmost.² They were established at Rome by the gods for their worship, Augustine's argument ran, and had always been used to appease their wrath or to avert disaster. Those gods cared not at all for virtue; rather they encouraged directly all sorts of vice, even in their prescribed worship, and rejoiced at the viciousness of the stage even when it disclosed their own iniquity. Augustine here contrasted the purity of the Christian worship with the depravity of the pagan; and attributed Rome's suffering, not to the new, health-giving religion, as many did, but to the sins of the fêtes in pagan shrines. Such a line of argument led to but one conclusion—a curse in this world, dramatic literature is equally futile for the next, since to rest one's hope of salvation, or to base one's trust in eternal life on the fictions of poets, is madness.

The force of Augustine's position is not in its novelty; he simply reaffirms what Plato and Tertullian had already said. It lies rather in its all-absorbing dread of idolatry, and in its zeal for reform. At the same time, Arnobius was speaking in the vein of Plato against the evil fictions concerning the gods;³ and Salvian, of playgoing as utterly incompatible with the professions of a Christian.⁴ But the other great figure of the century is for us Chrysostom. Through his impassioned homilies to the people, spoken in unveiled language and with detailed description, he reveals, more clearly than do others, the state of moral degradation

¹ *Soliloquies*, II, 16.

² See I, chap. 32-33; II, 3-14, 20, 27; III, 19; IV, 10, 26, 28; VI, 5-8.

³ *Adversus Gentes*, p. 217-18.

⁴ See chapter 4, p. 68 for the English translation of 1581.

to which the exhibitions had sunk. He attacked the idleness and extravagance caused by plays,¹ but it was their impurity that burned hottest at his heart as he urged upon his hearers that "all that is said and done there is a pageant of Satan."² Both because of the noteworthy similarities and dissimilarities between the character and life of this "golden-mouthed" orator of the early church and those of the men with whom we are to become familiar, it may be well to sketch briefly his career. Born in a home of refinement and wealth, and reared in the richest culture that Hellenic learning afforded, the brilliant and impassioned young advocate saw a career of worldly fame and honor before him. But these hopes he, like Basil, suddenly renounced; a new light had shone upon him, and with him right was the only way. He left his studies and his friends to take up in his own home the life of a most rigid ascetic, sacrificing all to duty. This life, however, was not long his; in him Tennyson's words are exemplified,

Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory.

He was called from his retirement to fill the highest position in the church at Constantinople. There, though surrounded with the vice and luxury of the great, he still kept with him the simplicity and austerity of his seclusion. In this position of prominence both his faults and his virtues appeared in highest light. He was irritable and unconciliatory to those who opposed his will; he was morose and uncongenial to all whom he disliked; he was extreme and severe in measures of reform, and intemperate in his denunciations of offenders. But beside these harsh traits that grew upon him with his great Puritan sacrifice, there was a kindness and magnetism in his nature, and a power in his simple eloquence, that made him as beloved by the people as he was hated by the rulers. He possessed a remarkable

¹ X, 42, 407.

² XIV, 66; also IX, 359, 442; X, 50, 249; XI, 262; XII, 68; XIII, 347.

depth and richness, not of culture merely, but also of soul, that distinguished him from others who have had the same austere purpose in life. In unconscious homage to this richness of nature, the people loved and protected him; and in reverence for it, we listen with trust to his impassioned appeals against the vices of the theater.

Enough has been said to reveal the uncompromising attitude of the Fathers against the drama. Their efforts were not unrewarded. Theodosius, influenced unquestionably by the entreaties of Arnobius, in 385 passed several restrictive measures;¹ and soon plays were forbidden on the Sabbath and on all other holy days. But the passion for public entertainments of all sorts was so deeply rooted in the tastes of the people that their production could never be totally suppressed. All through the Middle Ages, down into the 16th century, repeated edicts of Church councils attempted to curb the passion. In 305 one of the earliest councils forbade women to give actors their garments for stage use. It prohibited also the marriage of Christian women with players, and made it necessary for men of that profession to renounce the calling before admittance to the church.² In 314 the Council of Arles passed excommunication on all players within the church;³ and in 397 from the Council of Carthage came one of the earliest decrees forbidding churchmen to have any connection with the stage,⁴ an act renewed the next year and many times to come.⁵ Still more sweeping was the edict put forth by the Council of Africa in 424.⁶ It forbade plays on sacred days, since they drew the people from religious assemblies; and made it unlawful to compel any one to attend these exhibitions. The same council, realizing the folly of over-legislation, advised that plays be not altogether prohibited except on holy days; but if we remember that Augustine was one of the signers of this edict, we realize that the concession

¹ Schmidt, p. 430.

² Mansi, II, 15, canons, 57, 62, 67.

³ Ibid., II, 471, can. 5.

⁴ Ibid., III, 895, can. 13.

⁵ Ibid., III, 958, can. 88.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 490, can. 28.

was not made through any desire to alter the unwavering policy of clerical denunciation.

These early prohibitions had reference, of course, to the old secular plays which still survived. Many similar decrees were published by later councils. The majority of them laid special injunctions against churchmen's having any connection with the exhibitions, and some do not even mention the laity. Undoubtedly the church felt inclined wholly to discountenance the amusement, but its concern was primarily within its own body. Hence its spirit differed from that of the Fathers and of later English reformers. In much the same mood, when the evils associated with the presentation of sacred plays became apparent, the councils turned against them. We shall take as an illustration the Council of Basel in 1421, not as the earliest, but as one of the most definite expressions of this sentiment.¹ It forbade the so-called Feast of Fools, and decreed that no such sports should be allowed within the church, "quae domus orationis esse debet," nor yet in the church yard.² This edict was repeated again and again, aimed especially at performances on holy days. Thus the spirit of the days of Augustine and his fellows was carried down through the Middle Ages in the laws and in the writings of churchmen like Isidore and Thomas Aquinas.³

An apparent inconsistency between the teachings and the practice of the Fathers may perhaps be felt. Why, if their stand against plays was so decided in the fourth century, and why, if throughout the Middle Ages this remained unchanged, did the service of the church take on a form which led eventually to the liturgical drama and the miracle-play? One might suspect that the Christian church was forced to this step in order to attract people to Christianity; for from the conclusions of Tertullian's and Cyprian's treatises

¹ Ibid., XIX, 108. *De Spectaculis in Ecclesia faciendis.*

² The Synod of London in 1604 passed an order (canon 138) very similar to this. *Concilia Magnae Brit. et Hiberniae*, IV, 395.

³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Quæst. 168, art. 2-4; Quæst. 169, art. 2, vol. II, p. 786-8. Isidore, Migne, lxxxii, 409.

tises it is seen that many regarded the Christian's life as destitute of pleasure. Unquestionably, there would have been this excuse for any step taken for expediency, and at times in the later development of the drama it may have been influential. The Christmas plays, for example, took over much from the old pagan festival. But to imply, as Hurst does,¹ that the very origin of the later liturgy lay in a pandering to popular demands, is clearly false. Throughout the Middle Ages the church showed no appreciation of the connection between the drama of the liturgy and the low art kept alive by the outcast actors who strolled from castle to castle. In the eighth century, John Damascene contrasted as fundamentally unlike the holy spectacles of divine worship with the shameless plays held at the same time.² And often when the clergy apparently censured miracle-plays, they had in mind only the low, popular entertainments that intruded into them. Still clearer proof that the liturgy was not the child of expediency is the nature of its development. Had the church leaders been acting with purpose, there is no reason why the service should have begun with the simple, pantomimical duties of the officiating priest, and only gradually have assumed epical and lyrical elements, which slowly were combined in the complete liturgical play. The Church Fathers, being trained in Greek literature, would have seen at the start how the dialogue of the classical drama could be utilized in the responses, and how the chorus could be adopted, as it later was, in antiphonal singing; so that, with no opposition to fear from without and a great need to urge them from within, the liturgy would have arisen fully developed.

The form of the office of the Eucharist lay undoubtedly not in expediency, but in the spirit of the age. A low, degraded and dying civilization seeks amusement in vicious diversions; therefore Rome laughed at its mimes and farces as the Eternal City fell in ruin. On the other hand, an era of strong vitality, conscious of a grand past that has reached

¹ I, 921-7.

² Arnaud, p. 73.

its culmination, and trusting in its power to struggle against odds, and render imperishable the glory of that culmination, finds in noble tragedy the most natural form of expression. Such was the spirit of the youthful Christian brotherhood. The whole purpose of Hebrew history, the whole message of Messianic prophecy, had reached its fulfilment in the birth, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The fruits of this sacrifice were visible to the eyes of all; and the meanest of the brethren, as their enemies sneeringly noted, were eager to keep alive its memory and to render its purpose not in vain. It was natural, therefore, that they should unconsciously try to represent the most sacred part of their service—the office of the Eucharist—both in action and words. The priest at the altar began to express, by the movements of his hands and arms the culminating moment of the life of Christ, and gradually the congregation came in its responses to take part in the service.¹ By the fourth century all three essential elements of a drama—action, dialogue and singing—were embodied, though as yet in separate form, in the celebration of the mass; yet no one, least of all the zealous priests, was conscious that a tragedy was being performed at the altar—so true and natural was the service. Such was the impulse that clothed the celebration of the Eucharist in its outer form.

When the fully matured liturgical drama, however, passed into the mystery-play, all must have been conscious of the end to which the service had advanced, How then did the church regard its offspring? It must again be noted that the Fathers were thoroughly trained in Grecian culture. They saw the evils of Hellenic ideals; nevertheless, many, like Basil, were ready to avail themselves of the good of the old as they struggled to transcend the past, and to arrive at a truer life. Many of them, we believe, loved to read the old drama; so that Sylvester II stood not alone in regarding the words of Terence as fit precepts for the ordering of conduct.² The church was forced into opposition by the

¹ See Davidson's discussion of this point, p. 13-5.

² Creizenach, I, 200.

great and well-grounded fear of idolatry, and by the boundless immorality of the scenic exhibitions. As the danger of heathenism passed away, and as the mimes and farces sank further and further from recognition and from rivalry with the church, the greatest dread of Christians vanished, and, with no sacrifice of conviction, the drama newly arisen could be regarded in a changed light. If questioned, the churchmen would still have felt with Plato and Arnobius that to spend one's life in acting a part was inconsistent with the dignity of man created in God's image. Nevertheless, to enact the sacred story of the Bible would seem to be to lose one's life to take on a higher nature—the essence of all spiritual progress. Certainly the influence of such a drama, instead of being pagan, was both ethically and pedagogically Christian. In this way hope arose that only good would come of the sacred drama. The illusion was slowly dispelled, as the questionable elements of the old amusements crept into the church play. Then, having once fully realized its error, and having failed to tear away the evil, the church returned to a position of complete condemnation.

Thus the Fathers' apparent inconsistency can be reconciled. Looking back over this struggle against the theater preparatory to beginning a study of its reappearance in Puritan England, we ask ourselves what of the old church position was transient, and what was permanent. Much undoubtedly there was of an ephemeral nature. The great argument against the idolatry of plays could not long have a practical hold on the people. From the second to the fifth century, this was one of the greatest dangers of the stage, felt especially in the evening dusk of paganism when the old faith was making every effort to win back its devotees. Christian defenders were forced then to an extreme view. Tertullian could say that since the circus and the theater were consecrated to heathen gods, it mattered not whether their presentations were grand or mean, for as parts of idolatrous worship all were in the same degree offensive to God. From this he concluded:¹ "Nay, as regards the arts,

¹ *De Spectaculis*, p. 15-20.

we ought to have gone further back, and barred all further argument by the position that the demons, predetermining in their own interests from the first, among other evils of idolatry, the pollutions of the public shows, with the object of drawing man away from his Lord and binding him to their own service, carried out their purpose by bestowing on him the artistic gifts which the shows require. For none but themselves would have made provision and preparation for the objects they had in view; nor would they have given the arts to the world by any but those in whose names, and images and histories they set up for their own ends the artifice of consecration." Cyprian took the same view, that "the mother of all public amusements" was idolatry.¹ Under such conditions even a "well-trod stage" would have been deemed unchristian. Augustine, to be sure, apparently distinguished between plays of a high and a low order, ranking the ancient tragedies and comedies as less offensive in language, if not in subject, than those then in vogue.² But he styled them only the least offensive, and described the personal harm that they had brought to him; and he, above all others, in the crisis of the fourth century attacked the idolatrous origin and tendency of the public exhibitions.

This feeling could have no permanence in society. Just as Athens forgot the dangers of Persian invasion after the Eastern hordes had been hurled back to their homes, just as Rome forgot to cry out upon its rival Carthage after that city had fallen, so the Christian world lost sight of the perils of paganism. Even Tertullian admitted that harmless or necessary inventions of the heathen were lawful for Christian use, and had he lived some centuries later he might have been willing to regard plays as harmless, if not quite necessary, survivals of antiquity. At all events this argument against plays, though repeated by all Puritan moralists, had no firm hold on 16th century England. All movements have these transient aspects. But if they also

¹ *On Public Shows*, p. 224.

² *De Civitate Dei*, I, 32.

have a firm basis in truth, they will endure. The position taken by the early Christian Fathers rested almost wholly on such a foundation of solid rock. There is some force and validity in their idea that a life spent in acting destroys one's own personality. And in their struggle they fortunately were not confronted by a sacred drama, from its very nature predestined to a natural death; but with a secular drama, which, with the same attendant evils, has endured to this day. In behalf of purity and honor they attacked the vice and disorder brought by the stage, a menace felt in all ages. They objected to the desecration of the Sabbath, the English Puritans' first fighting ground; they objected to the social and industrial evils connected with stage-plays—idleness, and the misapplication of public and private wealth; and they based all on the same method of Biblical interpretation that for many years prevailed in England and America. In all these respects their arguments endured; and when the contest was begun in earnest in England, their words were still vital. They were Puritans no more different from the English Puritans than the Romans of the third and fourth centuries were different from the Englishmen of Elizabethan England.

CHAPTER 2.

ENGLISH SENTIMENT AGAINST THE STAGE, PREVIOUS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGULAR THEATERS.

(a) *Early Church Sentiment.*

The hostility of the early Christian Fathers, based, as we have seen, on sound principles of morality, had of necessity great influence on the churchmen of the Middle Ages. We have outlined the edicts of ecclesiastical synods against traveling showmen, the feelings underlying which held their influence in all countries as the time approached when the modern drama was to be born. But one point must again be emphasized. Many of the mediæval attacks on the stage had slight, if any, reference to the liturgical drama. Consequently, when we find an old Latin folio censuring popular entertainments, we must be careful not to read into it what really is not there. The traveling minstrels, as a last reminder of pagan society, still menaced Christian life, and these were constantly attacked. For example, Bede, who lived before any dramatic art existed in England, wrote,¹ "Qui fabulis otiosis, obscenisve carminibus, vel detractionibus, aurem libenter aperit, hanc animae suae portam mortis efficit, caeterosque qui non servat sensus, mortis sibi ipse reddit aditus"—a warning against the pagan minstrels' repertoire. In a similar spirit St. Bernard in the early 12th century wrote: "Mimos, et magos, et fabulatores, scurilesque cantilenes, atque ludorum spectacula, tanquam vanitates, et insanias falsas respuunt et abominantur."² Not much later John of Salisbury condemned the "histriones" and "mimi," those purveyors of "totam istam jocularium

¹ *In luce Evangelium Expositio*, Lib. II, c. 7.

² *Liber ad Milites Templi. Patrologia Latina*, vol. 182, p. 926.

scenam";¹ and at the close of the 15th century another Englishman, "Fabricius," spoke of the lusts of the theater in a way applicable rather to old Roman exhibitions than to those of his own country.² Even four hundred years after Bernard and Salisbury, the German reformer, Bucer, wrote on the true observance of the Lord's day:³ "Nec huius tamē religiosae diei otia relaxantes, obscoenis quenquā patimur voluptatibus detineri: nihil eodē die sibi vindicet scena theatralis, aut circense certamen, aut ferarū lachrymosa spectacula, etiāsi in nostro ortuaut natali, celebranda solemnitas inciderit, differatur." Bucer was fully alive to the conditions of his day, yet his words illustrate well how the old clerical disapproval was kept alive till a revival of dramatic activity gave it new vitality.

Through these mediums, sentiment against plays was transplanted to England and grew there. But no mere exotic feeling could have survived. The authority of the church, pitted at first largely against a foreign form of entertainment, and later against a widely popular sacred drama, might have controlled a certain class of Englishmen for an indefinite time; and, if it succeeded in dominating legislation, might have prevailed throughout the country during a certain restricted period. For all that, unless conditions in England itself had been of a character to nourish and supplement this alien sentiment, no lasting opposition to the stage could have been maintained. Few practical Englishmen would have listened, as Prynne did, to the censures of "a famous English Hermite" isolated from intercourse with the world.⁴ A passing review, therefore, of our English drama, to ascertain what elements there would give reason to the church attitude, and would cause a native grown distrust of the dramatic art, may not be irrelevant.

¹ Ward, I, 24.

² *Destructorium Vitiorum*, pars 4, c. 23, *De Ludis Inhonestis*.

³ *Psalmorum libri quinque*, p. 355.

⁴ So Prynne styles Ricardus Pampolitanus (date, 1430), *Histrion-Mas-tix*, p. 690, as he adduces his authority for support.

The miracle-plays of mediæval England represent but one mode of expression of that constant longing of the age to render a "literal translation of the spiritual truths into corporeal equivalents," as Symonds so well phrases it. In the early days of the art nothing but good came of the attempt. The acting was not done by that professional class which wandered over the Continent, growing more and more irreverent and indecent as the anathemas of the Church multiplied against them, and as their social status, in consequence, steadily declined. Everything connected with the earlier representations was of a sacred character—actors, authors, places and themes—so that the stage became second not even to the pulpit as an instrument of good. To be sure, these sacred dramas contained the same incongruity that marked the cathedrals, where the grotesque mingled with the sublime. The representations of Scriptural story were mingled with melodrama, as in the parts played by blustering Herod or Noah's recalcitrant wife; or were degraded into low comedy by the coarse words and gestures of the Devil, or into the most objectionable misappropriation of the sacred story. All such buffoonery and indecency, however, together with the profanity that stained so much of the dialogue, was entirely lost in the sacredness of the subject; the warrant of the Scriptures wiped away all sense of irreverence alike in actors and spectators. As a result, the scenes which shock or disgust modern feeling did not lessen at all the inspiration for the good and the pure received by those people whose strangely simple minds we can at present hardly comprehend.

In such an age, the old revulsion against a vicious art could find no wide acceptance. But out of unconsciousness soon grew consciousness, and out of consciousness, evil. Even in the morality-plays, to say nothing of the interludes which never so much as avowed moral intentions, the misuse of the drama became more apparent. The lessons taught by the personifications of good and evil, the essential feature of the original conception, came to mean less to the people

than the antics of the Devil and the Vice. The morality was then "very godly and ful of pleasant mirth," as the title-pages were wont to run. As they still further matured, the disparity between the two ingredients became more marked; there was less of the godly and more of the merry, till the didactic element sank into insignificance. For example, in *Like Wil to Like quod the Devel to the Colier*, although the moral expressed by the title is eventually enforced when the evil persons fall captive to the hangman, and the Vice is carried on the Devil's back "into Spain," the latter's home, while Tom Tossopot harrows the audience with his last confession and with well meant advice to parents, and while the notes of the moral song are sounding, it is nevertheless the coarse language, the drunkard's antics and the oaths which color the play and make it interesting, if interesting it could have been to any one. The same fault in *Cambyses*, *The Nice Wanton*, and many others, convinces the reader that vice was slowly sapping the life-blood of the sacred play.

As the church drama, which in origin had no connection with the old pagan games, thus grew away from its source, and became popular and secular, those familiar with the teachings of the Fathers, and cognizant of the increasingly denunciatory attitude of the church, objected more and more strongly to those elements of the old mimes retained or resuscitated in the liturgical play. Here is the connection between the early Christian sentiment against pagan exhibitions, and the sentiment of the later church against the child of its own birth. The warning words of the Fathers once more became vitalized, and their influence extended beyond the bounds of ecclesiastical circles. For just as the English people, almost independently of any classical influence, developed an artistic sense requiring a higher literary expression than the old, just so from their study of the Bible, apart from any teaching of Roman prelates, the sacrilege, profanity and coarseness of their sacred drama in its later days became manifest. And when this

sentiment is found developing, to revivify the church sentiment, we see the beginning of a condition in theatrical affairs which to a certain extent paralleled that of the Roman Empire, and which gave birth to another crusade against stage-plays.

(b) *Early English Hostility of Native Growth.*

In all countries these new conditions called forth some manifestation of the old spirit. In a later chapter we shall compare and contrast the main features of these various movements. For in England, owing to a marked religious bent of the people and to external conditions, the common arguments against the stage were given a peculiar reception. We have already named several Englishmen, who, with little sense of their environment, attacked the drama. But with the rise of a secular art, the old-time opposition of the Fathers assumed a native resonance, and hence added force. As early as the 13th century, we find an Anglo-Norman poem, *Le Manuel des Pechiez*, a translation from the Latin by William of Wadington,¹ deploring the universal love of the English people for romances and tales, and particularly for miracle-plays. These exhibitions the author blamed, not merely because they occupied part of the Sabbath, but also because of their fictions in regard to the saints, and the disguises used by the actors. However obscure the exposition of this last point may seem, the author clearly had in mind some feature of the English drama. The English version of this poem, *The Handlyng of Synne*, made in 1303 by Robert Mannyng, took care to sanction miracle-plays only when under the direct supervision of the higher clergy. Less English than either of these were the words of Thomas Bradwardine in the 14th century, the Archbishop whose learning the *Nun's Priest's Tale* heralded.² They sound especially faint and distant, since already the signs of a native sprung sentiment both among churchmen and laymen were visible.

¹ *Archaeologia*, XIII, 236-8.

² *De Causa Dei*, Lib. I, c. 1, cor. 20, p. 14-15.

For an expression of this home-nourished sentiment we look instinctively to two men of the 14th century—Langland and Wyclif. The former paid no attention to the subject; though in Piers Ploughman's Crede a friar proudly boasts that he and his fellows haunt no taverns, fairs or miracle-plays. More to our purpose is Wyclif's explanation in his sermon on the sins of sight: "Ne a man synneð not in siȝt, al oonli on þes two maneres [the coveting of women, or worldly goods], but whanne he is idil in his siȝt, and aspieþ not his profit; as sum men loken to veyn plaies, and many siȝtis of worldli pingis, þe which profiten not to her soule, but raper doiþ hem harm."¹ This passage is slight, but significant, and into it, with our knowledge of the speaker, we are inclined to read an English feeling.

An exhaustive sermon of the same century, the work, apparently, of one of Wyclif's followers, justifies this interpretation.² Without reservation the preacher censured as profanity the taking of the "most precious werkis of God in pley and bourde," as was done in the miracle-play; he saw in the plays more of the lusts of the flesh than of the breath of the spirit; he quoted the "Psauter Book" to restrain priests from even witnessing such performances,—in all which he but observed the teachings of the universal church. Nevertheless, every word that he spoke struck home to his hearers, though they knew nothing of old Rome, and no more of the world than was seen around them. The zealous preacher, with a seriousness common alike to early Christians and Puritans, argued that Christ, in reproving the woman who wept at his suffering, signified for future generations his displeasure at those tears shed in the passion plays. Verily, "Sory is not allowable byfore God, but more reprobable." With equal strength of conviction, since all "saints" admitted that the baldness of Elisha betokened Christ's passion, he instanced the fate of the boys who mocked that prophet as a warning that men "schulden not

¹ Wyclif, I, 250. For slight reference see Wyclif, E. E. T. S. p. 206.

² Reprinted in *English Drama and Stage; Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, 42-57.

bourden with the figure of the passion of Christ." But like all Puritan doctrine, his sermon is based far less on absurdity than on fact. In the spirit of the great Puritan poet who wished to live, "As ever in my great Task-Master's eye," he thought of the fast approaching "day of reckonyng," and called upon the people to shun the vain idleness of play-going, and give themselves instead to works of mercy.

Such words, whether inspired by foreign or native sentiment, would rouse in the rapidly sobering English mind a home-bred sense of the evil. Hatred of the church of Rome brought objection to the Catholic legends imbedded in the miracle-plays. And in Elizabeth's time, when each gentleman took pride in coining strange oaths, the sin of cursing grew more obvious, and the profanity of the dramas stood self-condemned. Moreover, as acting passed from the clergy into the hands of itinerant companies, the social evils attendant on the profession took genuine English color. Plays drew people from worship and labor, and wheedled them of their earnings. When this minister, therefore, showed his burning hatred of sloth, and of the waste on plays of money which people grudged to spend in paying "ther rente and ther dette," he must have mirrored a growing English sentiment grounded on social and economic needs. So also his belief that plays led to lechery, gluttony and other vices is no mere echo of the past. Along all these lines, the financial and social as well as the purely moral, the organized campaign of Elizabethan times was to be carried on; and as a type of the coalescence of the early Christian hostility with home-nourished English sentiment, this sermon is important.

(c) Causes of the Growth of this English Feeling.

If we so take our clew from this sermon, it must be with full consciousness that much of the early opposition to the drama arose on grounds entirely apart from questions of morality; and though all objections were soon allied, its

first source, therefore, was different from that of the sermon. The Fathers, to be sure, had also seen the economic and social dangers of the games, but that aspect was secondary to them. No words, at least, that they had spoken could make English people feel as plainly as did actually existing conditions the purely non-moral objections to their dramatic performances.

In the first place, the English theater early proved itself a source of civil disorder; and so many disturbances arose at the presentation of plays that the government, especially in times of tumult, looked askance at it. For instance, in 1549, Holinshed records,¹ conspirators took advantage of the crowd assembled at the annual play at Norfolk to incite the people to arms. In consequence, because actors not there alone, but commonly, played "such interludes as contained matter tending to sedition and contemning of sundry good orders and laws," plays were forbidden.² Similar precautions were taken throughout the reign of Edward VI, even in the private halls of Gray's Inn, from which all plays were banned by the authorities as a menace to good order.³

Other than civil disorders grew out of the concourse at plays. Hatred of the social vices of the clergy, their stinginess, greed and prosperity as contrasted with the poverty of the realm, rather than a more strictly religious sentiment, inspired the writer of a 15th century poem to attack the friars and their plays.⁴ The purely financial question was by all seen to be connected with theatricals. Our preacher made the waste of money one of his main arguments against miracle-plays, and with the growth of plays both in scenic display and in popularity, this evil steadily increased. As early as 1566 the payment of actors either to play in the town hall or to leave town without playing had become a grievous burden to the town of Leicester.⁵ Similarly, after the system of individual fees had been established, the

¹ III, 963-4.

² Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, II, I, p. 270.

³ Collier, I, 144.

⁴ Reprinted *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 322-3. See Ward, I, 53.

⁵ Kelly, p. 94.

< city of Norwich requested Parliament that players of interludes, who deprived the needy of their earnings, should be excluded from the city.¹ Opposition from this direction grew steadily, and in many places effectually, as one may infer from the decreased number of payments to strolling companies recorded in the municipal records of Shrewsbury.²

Such pecuniary burdens, however, constituted the least part of the economic objection to the dramatic art. Aside from all expense, the companies of wandering actors afforded a serious and difficult problem. By the year 1530 England was thoroughly alarmed at the rapid and steady increase, not of its impotent poor, but rather of its "sturdy beggars," who, partly because the "enclosures" had thrown many farm hands into idleness, partly because of the dissolution of the old asylums of pauperism, the monasteries, wandered over the country or thronged to the metropolis in search of an easy living.³ In 1530, the poor law of Henry VII was renewed, and increased vigilance was given to the enforcement of the provision that all "ruffians, Vagabondes and Masterles men" caught wandering without a license should be severely punished. So grave was the situation that in this class of rogues and vagabonds were included not merely the ordinary tramp, but unlicensed travelers of all descriptions, even scholars of the universities. How great was the need of such restraint is seen by the frequent renewals of the law. Elizabeth twice reenacted it; the first time in 1572. In that year Harrison explained its provisions thus:⁴ "Among roges and idle persons, finallie, we find to be comprised all proctors that go vp and downe with counterfeit licences, coosiners, and such as gad about the countrie, vsing vnlawfull games, practisers of physiognomie and palmestrie, tellers of fortunes, fensers, plaiers, minstrels, iugglers, pedlers, tinkers." The list is certainly suggestive of many crimes, and since all

¹ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, I, 104.

² *Ibid.*, Report, XV, 10, p. 37.

³ Traill, III, 251.

⁴ *Description*, p. 220.

evidence indicates that traveling showmen were not unworthy to be of the number of proscribed vagabonds, we see at once a sound foundation for objection to stage-plays.

An instance of this prejudice may be relevant. The satirical poem of Henry VIII's reign, *Cock Lorell's Bote*, associated with that notorious criminal other knaves such as—

Players, purse-cutters, money baterers
Gold washers, tomblerers, Jogelers.

According to the usage of the time, as Collier suggests,¹ the word players may refer to gamblers, but this seems to me improbable. The other knaves here mentioned, and the fact that "dysers" are later introduced, indicate, rather, that this is a condemnation of the actors' craft. And although it cannot be fairly inferred that the author regarded plays and players as evil in themselves, since representatives of all classes of English society, honest as well as dishonest, pull manfully at their oars in Cock Lorell's boat, it is, at least, a sure recognition of the lawlessness of the early showmen. Undoubtedly they deserved to be classed as they were. As they wandered through the country, often reduced to want, they became a lawless set, and besides causing sedition, annoyed in many ways the communities through which they passed. In consequence, their position was low, and they were led to avoid the charge of vagrancy by assuming, at least nominally, some trade. Ben Jonson was an actual bricklayer; but others became craftsmen only in name in order to give themselves a higher station in the eyes of the law; for to be regarded by the state as a rogue and a sower of sedition and heresy, and by common opinion as a vagabond, was at best no desirable situation.²

Such were the economic causes of the growth of hostility to plays in England. It was from sanitary reasons, also, that one of the strongest and most purely English objections to the stage arose. A glance through the chroniclers and diarists of Elizabethan times reveals the universal dread

¹ I, 57.

² Harrison, *Description*, App. I, Rindle's *Southwark*.

of the mystical, death-bringing curse of the age, the plague. Particularly in London the danger was felt, and there the greatest care was taken, both by the City Corporation and by the Privy Council, to check its ravages. Unquestionably, the assembling of people at the performances in the inn yards was a menace to public health. It was a danger, moreover, which even the least moral persons could appreciate, and one, too, with which the officials felt called upon to cope; and although it threatened especially the metropolis, the actors' custom of touring the rural districts when driven from London in times of plague rendered not immune the country at large. It therefore came to be one of the chief arguments of the Puritans in urging upon those not primarily concerned for morality the dangers of plays.

These purely economic or social objections to the theater readily passed into moral objections. Vagabondism and thriftlessness brought with them vice of all sorts; and even the plague, regarded as it was as a curse from God, came to have its moral significance in the eyes of the people. Note in the 14th century sermon how the different tendencies had coalesced. So close was such union that at times it is hard to analyze the motives of the censors. In 1557, the Privy Council took steps to stop the "lewde playe" called *A Sacke full of Newes*, and sent thanks to the Mayor of Canterbury for seizing a company of players with their "lewde playe booke"¹ Following, as these orders did, so soon after Mary's proclamation against anti-Catholic plays, it may be assumed that the nature of the affront was doctrinal, not moral. But no such easy solution can be found to the statement in Machyn's *Diary* for December 31st, 1559-60: "The sam day at nyght at the quen('s) court ther was a play a-for her grace, the wyche the plaers plad shuche matter that they wher commondyd to leyff off, and contentent (incontinently) the maske cam in dansyng." Whether Elizabeth, too, was here objecting to the impertinent meddling of the players in affairs of religion and state,

¹ Privy Council, *Acts*, pp. 102, 110, 168.

or whether she was offended with some grossness in the dialogue, is unstated. We should infer, though, the latter. According to modern etiquette, the Virgin Queen was far from squeamish in her notions of propriety, but we believe that she imposed, at least on others, certain restraints. In the prologue of *Sappho and Phao*, Lyly was careful to state, "We have endeavoured to be as farre from unseemly speeches, to make your eares glow, as we hope you will be free from unkind reports to make our cheeks blush." Similarly, he hoped that his *Gallathea* would offend neither "in scene nor syllable," since in her Majesty's mind, "where nothing doth harbour but virtue, nothing can enter but virtue." From these addresses to the Queen, we are willing to infer that the trouble in 1599 may easily have been moral. But the very ambiguity of the diarist's allusion serves well to illustrate the manifold objections which were brought against stage-plays.

On account of their moral tinge came the influence of these worldly considerations. After all, questions of frugality, industry and order were quite subsidiary to deeper considerations of morality. The extent and earnestness of the Puritans' objections to the vicious tendencies of the old plays is revealed only by serious writers; but a general appreciation of the clearly defined opposition of the stage to holy things is indicated in these same sources. In Henry V's time, a royal proclamation, though authorizing each person to be "honestly mery as he can, with in his owne hous dwellyng," forbade all interludes during the Christmas festivities.¹ This order undoubtedly sought to check the common excesses of the holiday season, and interludes were included because actors made no attempt to reconcile the long standing conflict between their art and the calls of the church. Their indifference, or rather wilful disregard, in the matter is well illustrated in the letter of Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, to Lord Protector Paget in 1547, requesting aid in thwarting the players' project for a "sol-

¹ Riley, *Memorials of London*, p. 669.

emn play" during his memorial services for the late king, "to trye who shal have most resorte, they in game, or I in earnest."¹ Such opposing interests of the pulpit and the stage were noticeable chiefly in the desecration of the Sabbath by the players. Even by men whose main spirit was far from religious was this evil recognized. We have an old poem which censures plays, particularly on Sunday, as "unthriftie."² Crowley's lines,³ also,—

And yet every Sunday
They will surely spend
One penny or two
The bear wards living to mend

may contain not only a criticism of the general lack of thrift, but even some feeling of the unfitness of those things on that day. Such dishonor of the Sabbath was popularly supposed to invoke a direct judgment from God; and when John Bradford mentioned before Edward VI the drowning of certain men as they were rowing to a Sabbath bear-baiting at Paris Garden, he could count on the sympathy of his hearers.⁴ More plainly still do we see the conflict of the church and the play-house in Whitgift's reply to Cartwright in 1574.⁵ The Puritan had accused the worshippers at the established churches of a want of reverence, including even the ministers, who, he said, rattled through the service as hastily as possible, either to leave time for the popular afternoon sports, or to make room for some interlude, which, for want of a better place, was to be given immediately in the church. Although the general charge Whitgift denied, he left the above mentioned clause unassailed. No feeling was more common than this of the profanation of the Lord's day; Bucer in Germany felt the evil, and in England from this time on the feeling grew that play-going on the Sabbath was a sin certain to call down the

¹ *State Papers*, 1547, p. 1.

² Reprinted in Collier, I, 25; see also, *Ibid.*, I, 231.

³ *Epigrams*, E. E. T. S. edit., p. 17.

⁴ Ordish, p. 135.

⁵ Whitgift, *Works*, III, 384.

curse of God upon the offenders. To this, perhaps, more than to any other one of these causes, the clear-cut opposition to the stage was due.

(d) *Evidence of early Elizabethan Objection to the Stage, in Legislation and in Literature.*

These various moral and civic principles operating against the drama united to underlie the actions of the London Corporation at this time. From a very early date, as early even as 1543, Collier says,¹ that body had been hostile to plays. With the renewal of the "Acte for the Punishment of Vagabondes" in 1752, new encouragement, it may be inferred, was given to the City's early opposition. At all events, it then became so outspoken that several notes were sent by the Privy Council to the Lord Mayor, asking why he should wish to restrain plays and drive them from the city.² For the Council, as usual, were ready to favor the players as much as possible, even venturing, on May 10, 1574, so far as to grant a royal patent to Leicester's servants, the first of its kind, in which authority was given them to perform within the limits of the metropolis.³ Such an open infringement of the powers of the city's magistrates called forth from that body a retaliatory measure, which illustrates well the close connection between the care for law and order and the definitely Puritanical scruples.⁴

In rehearsing the situation, the Corporation's order showed how the "inordynate hauntyng of greate multitudes of people, speciallye youthe" to plays was the cause of "frayes and quarrelles, eavell practizes of incontynencie in greate Innes, havinge chambers and secrete places adjoyninge to their open stagies and gallyries, inveyglynge and alleuryng of maides, speciallye orphanes, . . . the publishinge of unchaste, uncomelye and unshamefaste speeches and doynge, withdrawinge of the Quenes Majesties subjectes from dyvyne service on Soundaies & holly-

¹ I, 127.

² Privy Council, *Acts*, 1572, p. 215.

³ Fleay, p. 45.

⁴ Reprinted in *English Drama and Stage*, p. 27-31.

dayes, at which tymes such playes weare chefelye used, unthriftye waste of the moneye of the poore & fond persons, sondrye robberies by pyckinge and cuttinge of purses, utteringe of popular, busye and sedycious matters, and manie other corruptions of youthe." In addition to these serious moral affronts, the risk from the frequent collapsing of scaffolds and from the pestilence was also included. It was "that suche perilles maie be avoyded, and the lawfull, honest and comelye use of plaies, pastymes and recreacions in good sorte onelye permitted, and good provision hadd for the saiftie and well orderynge of the people thear assemblydd" that the Council enacted, under punishment of fine or imprisonment, that every public performance within the city should first be licensed by the Lord Mayor, and that the actors should be bound to good order, and hold themselves ready at all times to cease playing in time of plague, and to contribute part of their earnings to the city's charities. This long extract is given to show that, although the fundamental cause of London's anti-stage legislation was probably not directly moral, by the last quarter of the 16th century moral questions so largely influenced all their actions that they too must stand as civic Puritans.

When the moderate and just provisions of this order evidently failed to abate the evil, the next step of the Corporation was to expel all players from the city. In that crisis the players petitioned the Council to interfere, urging that to perfect the art in which the Queen so delighted a place was necessary in which to practise.¹ This petition the city officials, to whom it evidently had been forwarded, answered point by point. The reply asserted that the players, though driven from the inn yards, might still practise in private houses; that men with no other livelihood ought not to depend on such a precarious calling; that to play in plague time was to spread the infection, while to play out of plague time was to draw it upon the city as a curse from God; and that their former act of toleration in

¹ Fleay, p. 46-7.

1574 had expired with the assembling of the new body of aldermen. These sudden and unaccountable deaths of laws and orders, it may be observed, render the whole legislation of the time uncertain. But in this case there is no doubt that after the rejection of the proposed "remedies," whose only religious provision concerned Sabbath observance, plays were actually driven from the city in 1575, and that a temporary victory was won by the Puritan spirit of legislation.

Behind this stand taken by the authorities of London against the players and their benefactors in the Council, there must have been a decided sentiment on the part of the people. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to regard the defense of mirth found in the prologue of *Ralph Roister Doister* less as a schoolmaster's apology for his pupils' diversion than as an indirect reply to the adverse feeling of the middle of the century. At any rate, the scholar and dramatist, Wager, gave at the same date an open defense of the drama as a moral and intellectual force in society¹ in answer to contemporary Puritan detraction.

Yet strange to say, the early bishops of the reformed English church had little to say against the stage. Bullinger across the sea, whose influence in England was so great, said of miracle-plays, "They are at this day greatly set by, although scarce godly, by no small number of trifling and fantastical heads."² But that dramatic form was dying a natural death, and the evils of the secular drama had not yet forced themselves home upon many who loved the popular recreation. Consequently, the English clergy had at first little to say against the stage. Latimer, a Puritan in spirit and one of the first to scruple against vestments, spoke in his sermons against profanation of the Lord's day, against idleness and riot on holy days, and the blasphemy so common in the favorite pastimes—hawking, hunting, dicing and carding.³ Here especially his omitting to mention the stage

¹ Prologue, *Life and Repentance of Marie Magdalene*, ed. Carpenter.

² *Sermons*, III, 194.

³ *Sermons*, pp. 52, 231, 372.

is noteworthy; for on all these scores the theater was open to rebuke. That he laid no stress on it must indicate that in his day the evil had not assumed the menacing proportions of later years. With even more noticeable liberality, Archbishop Sandys, one of Elizabeth's first appointees, refused to condemn cards and dice as sins in themselves; and he, too, preached against idleness and revelry with no mention of the stage.¹ Bacon's attitude was more strict. He condemned absolutely dice and cards, and regarded the Sabbath as a day for Bible study, pious talk and deeds of mercy, and attacked idleness at all times. Yet apparently even he saw in the stage no serious menace to Christianity.² Several other churchmen of the same school mention the stage with no apparent condemnation. Hutchinson in his sermons made two or three incidental references to the scaffold with no adverse implication;³ and Tyndal, in the same spirit, remarked that some ceremonies expressed the death of Christ as plainly as "if we should play his passion on a scaffold or in a stage play."⁴ Even Ridley, in styling the vestments of a Roman bishop "too fond for a vice in a play," implied no weighty condemnation of the stage.⁵ In fact, the majority of the prominent churchmen of this early Elizabethan period took a moderate view of many things later abhorred; and although their principles in general on questions of morality and conduct, on Sabbath observance, for instance, and idleness, are the same as those of later Puritans, the complaint uttered in 1576 by Northbrooke, that his brother divines too seldom spoke of the great and growing abuse, was undoubtedly true.

Yet it must not be assumed that the sentiment against the stage in clerical circles, especially among ministers of the more practical sort, was not constantly growing. The moderate tone of the early divines, who, in conformity perhaps with the example of the Scriptures, did not specifically condemn the stage, naturally gave place, as the danger

¹ p. 118.² pp. 382, 108, 80.³ *Works*, pp. 215, 219, 250.⁴ p. 422.⁵ p. 289.

increased, to open condemnation. This is confirmed in the position taken by William Alley, the learned and kind-hearted bishop of Exeter, whose genial nature and honest enjoyment of wholesome recreation made his friendship valued by all. In 1560 he delivered at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul lectures which later appeared under the title *The Poore Mans Library*. In it was included an article on *Wanton Bookes*.¹ Alley maintained that the evil books so common in England kindled in the minds and hearts of their readers the most unholy passions, and argued that if witches under the Mosaic law were deemed worthy of death, much more deserving of that fate were those defilers of the mind, the vicious authors. He likened the evil to smoke ready to break out into flame. Those who read these works for the sake of knowledge, or to while away the time, he warned of the danger of saluting Venus, even, as they said, from afar. His words were especially serious since he believed that professing Christians erred more often in this respect than many pagans. The connection between such writings and stage-plays, whose plots were drawn very commonly from lewd Italian stories, Alley regarded as obvious. In this respect, also, he felt that Christians had much to learn from Pagans. He cited the case of Mar-seilles, of which all later Puritans were so fond, which among other good orders for public morality, "made a severe law that there should be no comedy playd within the City, for the argument for the most part of such playes, did contain the actes of dissolute and wanton love." The wisdom of the Athenians, also, he commended, who forbade the Areopagites to write any comedies and tragedies. And the purity of the Lacedemonians he attributed to this—"that they were never present at any Comedy, nor any other playes, fearing least they should heare and see those thynges, which were repugnant to their lawes." It is human nature, Alley reasoned, that whatever is willingly and gladly heard is soon embraced and put to use. The great popularity of

¹ Praelectio Secunda, fol. 46^b-48^a.

plays in England, therefore, he lamented in the words, "And alas, are not almost all places in these dayes replenished wyth iuglers, scoffers, iesters, players, which may say and do what they lust, be it neuer so fleshly and filthy! and yet suffred and heard wyth laughing and clapping of handes"; to which he added in contrast between England and Athens, "I speake it with sorow of hart, to our vicious ballet makers, and enditers of wanton songes, no reuengement, but rewardes are largely payd and geuen."¹ So much importance we give to Alley not merely for the high position held by him in the English church, but also for his early date, and for his evident influence on one usually called the first of the Puritan attackers.²

A similar argument against lewd books and plays was spoken in 1572 by Edward Dering, a Puritan divine whom Archbishop Parker styled "the greatest learned man in England,"³ whose opinion, therefore, in spite of his vehement and impulsive nature, deserves, like Alley's, great weight. In the spirit of his predecessor he attacked in his Brief and necessarie Catechisme or Instruction the extreme licentiousness of the literature of his age, the romances like *Guy of Warwick* and the lewd songs, the "vnchast fables, & tragedies, and such like sorceries," "our Pallaces of pleasure," as he called them.⁴ But it was not the clergy alone who voiced his wish, "O that there were among vs some zealous Ephesians, that books of so great vanity might be burned up." Two years earlier Roger Ascham had attacked in the same spirit the literature, dramatic and otherwise, of his day. He, too, was bitterly opposed to wanton romances such as the *Morte D'Arthur*, and ten times more opposed to the Italian translations so popular in England.

¹ In a second group of *Miscellanea*, at the beginning of Book 6, there is a short passage headed, *Tragedie*, in which tragedy and comedy are briefly defined; but this article contains no special criticism of plays.

² Northbrooke later used Alley's words, illustrating what we shall again have occasion to notice—the interdependence of the different attacks.

³ *Parker Corresp.*, p. 410.

⁴ To the Reader.

Even the subject matter of Latin plays, "thoughtes and conditions of hard fathers, foolish mothers, vnthrifite yong men, craftie seruantes, sotle bawdes, and wilie harlots," afforded, he thought, dangerous example to youth. "Here is base stuffe for that scholer, that should be cum hereafter, either a good minister in Religion, or a Ciuill Ientleman in seruice of his Prince and contrie."¹ These words refer to the ancient comedies; but their author, who despised so thoroughly the popular Italian literature, must have valued no more highly the productions of his own day.

If in Ascham we find a layman joining in the ministerial censure of the stage, in Grindal we find a divine writing largely from the standpoint of a layman, an illustration of how all sides of the opposition made common cause against the enemy. Grindal was the archbishop removed by Elizabeth for his Puritan leanings in the matter of prophesyings. In 1563 the plague raged in London, and he, though never aggressive, sent this advice to Secretary Cecil:² "By search I perceiue, that there is no thing of late more like to have renewed this contagion, than the practice of an idle sort of people, which have been infamous in all good common-weals; I mean these histriones, common players, who now daily, but specially on holydays, set up bills, whereunto the youth resorteth excessively, and there taketh infection: besides that God's word by their impure mouths is profaned and turned into scoffs. For remedy whereof, in my judgment, ye should do very well to be a mean, that a proclamation were set forth to inhibit all plays for one whole year (and if it were for ever, it were not amiss) within the city, or three miles compass upon paines, as well to the players, as to the owners of the houses where they play their lewd interludes."

These four critics were men of deservedly high and enduring reputation. The attack came also from the younger clergy, and from all classes of the laity. The trend of preceding years had so prepared the soil that even

¹ *Scholemaster*, p. 143. Arber Reprint.

² *Remains*, p. 269.

foreign sentiment against the stage grew readily. So Cornelius Agrippa's words against plays, first translated into English in 1569, met with ready acceptance.¹ So also both North's *Dial of Princes*, in censuring playgoers for idleness and extravagance, and in distinguishing between ancient and modern theatrical conditions,² and the translation from Vives in its advice on the conduct befitting a gentlewoman,³ caused no discord.

Further record of the same opinions is not far to seek. As early as 1545, during the investigation into the offense of the play *Pammachius* at Cambridge, it was testified that a man named Scott, probably Mary's later bishop, "was not agreeable to the playing at the first, nor pleased with it when it was played." This may imply an objection to plays in general.⁴ From the laity we find similar expressions.⁵ Harrison, in chronicling for the year 1572 the temporary banishment of plays from plague-ridden London, added, "Would to god these comon plaies were exiled for altogether, as semenaries of impiety, & their theaters pulled downe, as no better then houses of baudrie. It is an euident token of a wicked time when plaiers wexe so riche that they can build suche houses. As moche I wish also to our comon beare baitinges vsed on the sabaothe daies."⁶ Although entries in the *Chronology* appear as late as 1592, it is reasonable to suppose that the above extract was written, at least

¹ *De Incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum*, chap. 4, against poetry; chap. 20, against stage dancing and lewd plots; chap. 59, against violation of holy days by plays; and chap. 63, on theatrical vices.

² Lib. III, c. 43-46, a translation from Guevara.

³ *A very Fruitful and Pleasant Booke called the Instruction of a christian woman*, 1557, Book I, c. xlii.

⁴ *Parker Corresp.*, 21-9. See also below, p. 50.

⁵ Arber's reprint of the *Stationers' Registers* (I, 155, b.) gives under the year 1566-7 a ballad "Fayne wolde I have a virtuous wyfe." Collier (*S. R.*, I, 162) quotes one stanza of this, where the man prescribes that his wife should not attend plays to see the "lewd actors." Collier admits, however, that this ballad has been retouched in the parts bearing on smoking, and hence we do not include it in the body of the thesis.

⁶ *Chronology*; quoted from the *Description*, iv.

in its first draft, at approximately the date that it bears. At Cambridge the spirit of opposition early took root. In 1564 the Vice-Chancellor replied to Archbishop Parker's request for a report of all irregularities there, that "two or three in Trinity College think it very unseemly that Christians should play or be present at any profane comedies or tragedies."¹ From such testimony we see how widely the Puritan spirit was spreading.

(e) *This Sentiment was maturing, but still moderate.*

Perhaps we have shown how false it is to suppose that the Puritan attack on stage-plays, to say nothing of the sentiment against them, began in the year 1576. But though we have cited instances of attack much earlier than that, we can also adduce evidence that the attack was not yet completely organized. So gradual was the growth of the new sentiment that Puritanism did not disdain to use the stage as a tool just at the time that sentiment against it was gathering for definite expression. For some time after the Reformation, even into Elizabeth's reign, miracles and moralities were written solely to support the new religious order. Several interludes of this character were written in the reign of Henry VIII; and though none have been preserved, a letter by Thomas Wylley, a clergyman, is extant, complaining of the persecution he had suffered because of his plays against the Papists.² From later years we know of many such plays. Bale was prominent as a dramatist in this field; and also Udall and Grimald, the Protestant minister and Latin playwright. True, we must not ascribe all the well-known anti-Catholic plays to Puritanism. Many staunch Romanists like Heywood, and many non-partisans like Chaucer felt free to lash unsparingly the vices of pardoners and friars; while some strictly doctrinal attacks, written even by the Puritan Bale, were too vulgar to be truly Puritan. Several of the Protestant plays, however, can be fairly identified with Puritanism; for at that time

¹ *Parker Corresp.*, p. 226, n.

² Collier, I, 131.

Puritanism had not taken on its peculiar doctrines, and was simply an advanced Protestantism. Both movements followed the same path for a long way in their desire for a more Scriptural worship, and in their spirit of resistance to certain church ceremonies, and in their zeal for social reform; and many of Elizabeth's most prominent bishops and divines, owing to their study during the Marian exile, still sympathized at least in part with Swiss reformers.¹ Therefore, when Bale wrote in 1550 in regard to Henry's laws against anti-Catholic plays, "So long as they [players] played lyes, and sange bauldy songes, blasphemed God, and corrupted mens consciences, ye never blamed them, but were verye well contented. But sens they persuaded the people to worship theyr Lorde God aryght, . . . without your lowsie legerdemains, ye never were pleased with them,"² we see the approval with which Puritanism looked on Reformation plays.

The play *Lusty Juventus*, written to support the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, and to attack the forms of the church of Rome, is really Puritan, not merely Protestant, in the spirit which inspires its long, Biblical quotations, its polemics and didacticism, its trust in preaching for man's salvation, and its characteristically Puritan statement in regard to dancing—"There is no such passing the time appointed in Scripture." In another play of the same period, *New Custom*, the Catholic, and consequently evil, characters show clearly that they regard their Protestant opponent, Light of the Gospel, as a Puritan from beyond the Sea. Perverse Doctrine says:

For since these Genevan doctors came so fast into this land,
Since that time it was never merry with England,

and Ignorance thus describes the new ministers:

With a gathered frock, a polled head and a broad hat,
An unshaved beard, a pale face.

¹ Traill, III, 424-5.

² Collier, I, 132-3. "Henry Stalbrydge," the author, was John Bale see *Athenae Cantabrigienses*, I, 229.

Furthermore, when New Custom, who admitted that some distinguishing garb was appropriate for the clergy, stated that belief in vestments as a source of religion in themselves was a superstition of popery, he took the moderate stand of all early Puritans in regard to the matter. If it is borne in mind that this play was written in 1573, after all the early attacks on the stage, the inconsistency of the Puritan position is seen at its strongest.

To a much less extent the Catholics used the same medium to reply to their opponents.¹ A detailed narrative of the quarrel does not concern us here; only in a twofold way does it deserve attention. In the first place, it called forth much repressive legislation. Henry VIII forbade any attack to be made on the Roman church from the stage;² and the thoroughness with which Chancellor Gardiner in 1545 investigated the offense given the Papacy in the play *Pammachius* at Cambridge is an instance of the care taken for the law's enforcement.³ That Mary should have taken every means to check the attack on her religion, even to the repression of all plays save at London, where a strict censorship could be maintained, is not surprising.⁴ Nor, when we consider Elizabeth's Tudor blood, her distrust in the meddling of the people in state matters, and her uncertain religious inclinations, need we wonder at her continuance of the old policy. Consequently, government supervision became familiar to all, and nothing seemed more logical to the Puritan than that the authorities ought to extend their restraint to points of morality, as well as to points of sedition and heresy. In this way the opponents of the stage on moral grounds learned to join hands with those whose complaints had more weight with the rulers. The stage also accustomed itself from the start to religious controversy, and when a later occasion demanded, could readily turn to travesty. These

¹ For the play at Mary's court, *Respublica*, see Ward, I, 136, 139. See also *Everyman*, and, for a reprint of a Catholic poem, *Pore Help*, Strype's *Eccl. Mem.* II, Part II, 333-7.

² 34 and 35 Henry VIII, c. 1.

³ Strype, *Parker*, I, 35-40.

⁴ Privy Council, *Acts*, 1553, p. 426. Also *State Papers*, 1556, p. 82.

two facts partially account for subsequent events. But the surprising thing about it was the inconsistency of the Puritan position. While some were bitterly condemning all stage-plays, others, of apparently the same religious views, were using that medium to gain support for their cause. This clearly proves two things; that there was at the time no rigidly bound Puritan party, and that many good people, in spite of its great possibilities for evil, had as yet not given up faith in the stage as a religious teacher.

In addition to this wavering of the Puritan, or advanced Protestant, party against plays, we find another proof that the warfare was as yet but beginning. The early Puritans' strictures were free from all uncharitable bitterness; while the upholders of the drama exhibited a like fair-minded disposition. Such charity was soon to disappear as the lines of separation became more firmly marked, and as both parties smarted under the denunciations of their opponents. The one reply which we shall dwell upon came in 1575 from Laneham, a lover, like his patron Lord Leicester, of old romances, country sports, bear baitings, masks, and the like. He spoke with regret of the abolition of the Hock Tuesday play. For, as he said, it was wont to be celebrated yearly in his city "without ill exampl of mannerz, papistry, or ony superstition: and elz did so occupy the heads of a number, that likely inoough woold haue had woorz meditationz." This good celebration had recently been put down, he added, through "the zeal of certain theyr Preacherz: men very commendabl for their behauour and learning, & sweet in their sermons, but sumwhat too sour in preaching away theyr pastime."¹ We closed the outline of London legislation of this period with the year 1575, when the temporary victory was won. The city's spirit had been conservative, and as late as 1574 moderate measures had been passed. We may perhaps best close our survey of the growing sentiment against the stage among the clergy and laity alike with this quotation from Laneham. It allows us to infer that sermons

¹ *Laneham's Letter*, p. 26-8.

at Leicester, and hence in other sections of the country, had been preached against the stage. The tenor of these sermons can be surmised from the sentiments of the great churchmen whom we have studied, and from the statements of the laity as well. These clearly show that at the beginning of the last quarter of the 16th century, the stage had been subject to attack on all grounds—as a moral corruption to youth; as a desecration to things holy; as a menace to public order and health; and as a source of idleness and poverty. But Laneham's letter also shows how free the controversy was from all bitterness. Many of the best churchmen, we have seen, refrained from particularizing, and preached on general moral precepts; and those who did reach to condemnation of the particular vice did so in a fair and just spirit. Even interesting old Laneham, with his keen zest for all rude, rural sports, though convinced like his fellow Leicestershiremen that ministers had better attend to their pulpits and leave Hock Tuesday plays and other civil affairs to the magistrates, nevertheless bore no malice to the reformers, and still had a good word for them.

This old document leads to a natural period of retrospection. The events of many years have been reviewed, yet the reader must not forget that at the conclusion of this first period in the controversy over stage-plays in England our discussion has advanced only to the time of the regular drama's birth. Before the year 1575, the English theater had had no permanent home, and no established system. Yet for that very reason the results of our study are important. They show how the earliest English sentiment followed directly, though naturally and with the masses unconsciously, in the footsteps of the old. They show also how from both social and moral considerations the English opposition grew, enrolling under its standard those who cared for the public welfare, together with those who sought purity and holiness. And they show, also, with what conservatism and sanity the movement began, and for a long time progressed. It is well to bear this in mind as we

advance to later phases of the quarrel. If we lament that open breach came so early, before solid appeals like Sidney's and Spenser's, and before ennobled productions like Milton's, or, in fact, any high dramatic art had appeared to plead in self-justification for an elevation of the art above the tastes of London apprentices, these facts give at the start a sense of the justness and conservatism of the Puritan cause, which will counterbalance any previously conceived notions of its narrowness, and inspire a respect for those later reformers who built so boldly on the foundations laid in these early years.

CHAPTER 3.

NORTHBROOKE, THE LEADER OF THE ACTIVE CAMPAIGN.

The preceding chapter has traced the growth of English opposition to the stage to the years 1575 and 1576, when the city of London at last succeeded in expelling the players from its limits, and when a clearly defined sentiment was rapidly spreading throughout the country. This opposition was led by men high in the English church; for, to repeat somewhat, Puritanism was then only an advanced Protestantism, touching forms, not doctrines, and supported partially, at least, by many of Elizabeth's early bishops. In these years a natural division appeared in the controversy. In 1575 the London Corporation won its temporary victory, and, resting on its arms, awaited the renewal of the warfare which the defiant opening of regular theaters in the Liberties, just without the boundaries of the city, rendered inevitable. Events seemed also to culminate in that year for the main body of the Puritan party. In 1575 the see of Archbishop Parker fell to his more liberal successor, Grindal, whose sentiments on the stage had already been heard; and to the extreme branch of the church renewed hope of recognition was given. Not much later, in 1576, the genuine Puritan sentiment against the stage, which had already found expression in Alley, Dering, North, Harrison and others, was crystalized in the first definite and extended arraignment of the English drama. Therefore, we naturally end the first period of our survey with the oncoming of these years. For, in pursuing the study, a merely chronological arrangement of material, which leaves everything unconnected, is insufficient. Scarcely more satisfactory is it to group the different phases of the movement according to the sovereigns' reigns, since only a small part in the struggle was borne by the court. To mark the different stages in the attack by the appearance of the most prominent and characteristic of the Puritan treatises is a far more logical

method of division. And still better is it if certain periods can be found in which at approximately the same time the Puritan literary campaign and the civic opposition came to a crisis, and together gathered their forces for a new advance. Such a point was reached at the beginning of the last quarter of the 16th century. By that time the preliminary work had been done; the London theater was firmly and defiantly settled in its permanent home; and, in consequence, the time was ripe for a more active and consecutive literary warfare against stage-plays.

Beginning this new period with the renewal of the civic struggle, and with the commencement of the Puritans' literary attack, we shall trace the growth of the movement, passing by the slight culmination of events in 1583-4, and closing the second period with the last years of the Queen's reign, when again both parties to the attack seemed to rest momentarily before renewing their active endeavors for reform.

No decided break is to be looked for at the beginning of any of these periods. The first of the definite Puritan attacks, the honor of which belongs to John Northbrooke, showed the same moderate tone and spirit of fairness that had marked the utterances of earlier years. Northbrooke, a man apparently of liberal culture, was one of the first ministers ordained by Bishop Berkeley of Bath and Wells. At one time he was imprisoned by the Bishop of Exeter, it may be inferred for some act of nonconformity. And that as early his eye was open to the abuses around him is revealed in the dedicatory epistle of his first publication, where he gives, as one of his motives for writing, the savage abuse of John Blackeall, whom he had detected in certain offenses.¹ Was this not the same Puritan spirit that moved him in 1577, with the motto *Spiritus est vicarius Christi in terra*, to enter for publication, *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine playes, or Enterluds, with other idle pastimes, &c., commonly used on the Sabboth day, are*

¹ For the facts of his life we have used the *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.*

reproved by the Authoritie of the word of God and auntient writers? In perfect harmony with these words, the citation from Cicero at the close of the long title, "*We are not to this ende borne that we should seeme to be created for play and pastime; but we are rather borne to sagesnesse, and to certaine grauer and greater studies,*" reveals the Puritan temper of the author and foretells the nature of his work.

Notwithstanding, Collier, the editor of the Shakespeare Society's reprint of the *Treatise*, hesitated to call Northbrooke a Puritan. His very method of argument, "made dialoguewise," seemed to Collier strangely inconsistent in a work of its kind. But to the Puritan, dialogue had no necessary connection with the drama. The Book of Job had that form; it was used by Grindal, also, in his *Fruitful Dialogue between Custom and Verity*, and later by Bunyan; and even to those Puritans unfamiliar with Plato no inconsistency in Northbrooke's method could have suggested itself. In other respects, equally groundless, he seemed to Collier un-Puritan. If Northbrooke was inclined to permit academical plays, so also were other of the early Puritan attackers, notably North; if he did sanction honest recreation and betray a love of certain field sports, so also did Alley and his fellows; and his feeling that to gather hay on Sunday in order to save it could be no harm, at least not so harmful as to idle away the day, was a latitude of opinion not unusual, especially in the early days of Puritanism. Even Dr. Bownd's work on the Sabbath, the rock bottom of later Sabbatarian feeling, allowed considerable freedom in works of necessity; and John Rainoldes, the petitioner at the Hampton Court Conference for a stricter observance of the day, permitted liberty in the very point at which Collier found Northbrooke stumbling. With apparent commendation Rainoldes once wrote,¹ "Good Emperours haue allowed men to doe their workes of tillage and husbandry on the Sunday, when other daies the season

¹ *Overthrow*, p. 14.

serueth not." Northbrooke's position, therefore, was quite in accord with Puritan ideas, and quite natural in one mindful of the parable of the unfortunate sheep. He was a staunch Protestant, as his hatred of the Papists indicates; he was, moreover, a staunch Puritan of that moderate and liberal spirit common among ministers of Parker's and Grindal's archbishoprics.

To this conclusion, the outline of the *Treatise* must force us. It is in form a dialogue between erring, but well-intentioned Youth, and Age, a man trained in the knowledge of pagan authors, the Church Fathers and the Scriptures. As Age is on his way home from church, he meets Youth, and, on learning how he has wasted his day, takes occasion to give him a lesson from the Bible and the holy writers on righteousness and moderation in all things. This is the keynote of his advice. Quoting Scripture for his authority, he grants Youth readily such "good exercises and honest pastimes" as may be necessary to refresh his body for a renewal of labor; but urges care lest these recreations be used to excess. For even honest diversions, if they conflict with divine service, Bible study, or holy deeds, become sins. And against those idlers, "detestable and odious" in any commonwealth, who, regardless of their Maker, waste their time and substance in "vaine, wanton, and idle playes [pastimes]," his wrath never softens. Every idle hour to Age, especially on the Sabbath day, every idle word, is a misapplication of God's gifts, and an enticement to so many crimes that again and again he comes back to this topic. If the worthy laws against idlers were but enforced, he says, England would not harbor "so many loytering ydle persons, so many ruffians, blasphemers, and swinge bucklers, so many drunkardes, tosepottes . . . diceplayers and maskers, fencers, theeves, enterlude players, cutpurses."¹ In this way the subject of stage-plays is gradually approached. They, too, are included among those "euil and unprofitable acts" that lead

¹ p. 76.

men to ruin. Yet in his characteristically moderate spirit, lest he be thought "too stoicall and precise," Age hesitates to condemn all plays. Explaining away Cyprian's apparent condemnation of the training of child actors, he would permit the use of plays in schools, provided they be kept free from evil words and acts, and used in moderation, without any outlay in gaudy apparel, and, with no pecuniary motives, solely as a means of instruction.¹ But he refuses absolutely any further sanction of theatrical performances, lest he in so doing should "giue waye to a thousande mischiefes and inconueniences, which daily happen by occasion of beholding and haunting suche spectacles."² Liberal and sound in principle, his final stand against the art is taken only to preserve the fundamental safeguards of religion and society. But since excess of all sorts is commonly regarded as its blemish, let due recognition be given to the Puritanism which acts in an intelligent and broad-minded way.

Thus it was not against art as art that Northbrooke objected; for of true poetry and music he approved. It was only the immoral tendencies of plays that forced him to his decided stand. In the moral efficacy of the miracle-play, with its mingled "scurrilitie and diuinitie," he had no faith; but that form of the drama was too clearly expiring to give ground of itself to his attack. Nor would his practical Christian nature have objected seriously to man's wearing of woman's clothes had no evil come of it. Even for the waste of money he could probably have devised some means of correction. It was the actual lewdness of the plays of his time, and the actual evil of the play-house that inspired such passages as,³ "I am persuaded that Satan hath not a more speedie way, and fitter schoole to work and teach his desire, to bring men and women into his snare of concupiscence and filthie lustes of wicked whoredome, than those places [the Theater and

¹ *Epist.* 16, lib. 1. See *Treatise*, p. 103-4.

² p. 83.

³ pp. 85-6, 91.

the Curtain], and playes and theatres are"; and led him to declare, "I dare boldlye say, that fewe men or women come from playes, and resortes of men, with safe and chaste mindes." Consequently his motive resembled that of the Fathers, and that of all who followed him, based, as it was, on the impurity of the stage.

For such an attack, an intimate knowledge of existing conditions, especially in London, was necessary. At Bristol, Northbrooke's home, plays had been common from an early date,¹ and their evil he must have seen. When in his *Treatise*, therefore, he styled the actor's profession an "ydle loytering life, a practise to all mischiefe," he had in mind, perhaps, some actual disturbance at Bristol. Intimacy, also, with London life is revealed in passages which give valuable bits of testimony in regard to those early days of the stage. In his work is found one of the earliest references to the new play-houses in the Liberties. Likewise in regard to 16th century methods of advertising, he noted that the players used to "set vp their billes vpon postes certain dayes before" the performance;² and concerning the popularity of the stage he testified, though perhaps needlessly, "~~Many can tarie at a vayne playe two or three houres, when as they will not abide scarce one houre at a sermon.~~ They will runne to euerye playe, but scarce will come to a preached sermon."³ His picture of the actors and their audiences is significant, since Alley years before had used the same words, "Are not almost all places in these our days replenished with iuglers, scoffers, ieasters, and players, which maye saye and doe what they lyst, be it neuer so filthilye and fleshlye, and yet are suffered, and hearde with laughing and clapping of handes."⁴ Such passages are sufficient to convince the reader that Northbrooke knew whereof he spoke.

But others more conversant than Northbrooke with theatrical life have preserved more detailed pictures of play-

¹ Collier refers us to the documents of the town published by Tyson.

² p. 102.

³ p. 94.

⁴ p. 91.

house manners; and his pages are chiefly valuable for their characterization of the early dramas themselves.¹ "In their playes," he wrote, "you shall learne all things that appertayne to craft, mischiefe, deceytes, and filthinesse, &c. If you will learne howe to bee false and deceyue your husbandes, or husbandes their wyues, howe to playe the harlottes, to obtayne one's loue, howe to rauishe, howe to beguyle, howe to betraye, to flatter, lye, sweare, forswear, howe to allure to whoredome, howe to murder, howe to poyson, howe to disobey and rebell against princes, to consume treasures prodigally, to mooue to lustes, to ransacke and spoyle cities and townes, to bee ydle, to blaspheme, to sing filthie songs of loue, to speake filthily, to be prowde, howe to mocke, scoffe and deryde any nation . . . shall not you learne, then, at such enterludes howe to practise them." This characterization of the old intrigue comedy is valuable because we know so little of the plays of that time. It may possibly be exaggerated, for Northbrooke, like so many Puritans, unconscious of the greater depravity of Roman exhibitions, regarded English plays as the culmination of all wickedness. Yet this misconception did not undermine the soundness of his argument. His trust in the Scriptures, his effective use of the Fathers' words, and the calmness of his spirit leave the impression that the *Treatise*, as a truthful plea for morality, is a credit to its author, and worthy of the attention of Elizabethans, in no wise deserving of the "fuming freates and belching ires of saucie sicophants, dice-players, dauncers and players."²

Such was the character of the first of the definite attacks upon the stage. To call it the first is certainly false. Northbrooke's arguments had all been previously expressed in England; and, to illustrate the intimate relation between him and his predecessors, we would again call attention to the passage in the *Treatise* which is but a direct reproduction of Bishop Alley's words against the stage. He preserved, also, so much of the moderation and fairness characteristic

¹ p. 94.² *Treatise*, Dedication, p. 6.

of the incipient quarrel that there is evidence even to indicate that his words were not at once widely recognized as a part of the heated controversy so soon to begin. His *Treatise*, nevertheless, though in these ways connected with the past, belongs to the new campaign, both because it was directed against the resorts in the Liberties, and because of its scope and style.

CHAPTER 4.

THE HEAT OF THE CONTROVERSY.—THE GOSSON-LODGE DEBATE.

Although Northbrooke's *Treatise* is a true exponent of Puritan hostility to stage-plays, there is reason, as we shall see, to believe that if it became at once widely known, it was not at least regarded as a part of the heated and acrimonious quarrel that soon began. This is probably due to the moderate, dignified and uncontroversial temper of the *Treatise*, which made it an exhortatory warning, rather than an attack. This distinction is now to be illustrated as we pass by for the present several sermons of about this time, and go on to the next writer who in 1579 came into the field as the challenger of plays. Through him we approach the quarrel from an entirely different angle; for Stephen Gosson was a far different man from his predecessor, Northbrooke. He was a Kentishman by birth, a Bachelor of Arts of Oxford, and a Londoner by adoption. There he became noted for his excellent penning of pastorals, and later followed the popular literary fad of play-writing, "drawn like a novice to these abuses," and, according to Lodge, became an actor as well.¹ Three of his plays are known by name, *Catiline's Conspiracy*, *Captain Mario*, and a moral play, *Praise at Parting*. But by his twenty-fifth year, having seen the error of his ways and reformed, he used his pen to keep others from the sins of the theater. Notwithstanding, his tracts against the stage belong in spirit and style to the first period of his life, before he finally settled down as parish vicar; and therefore in them we are introduced to the controversy, not from the standpoint of men of Northbrooke's circle, but from the position of intimate association with the profession.

Fleay, thinking of Gosson, Munday and Rankins, states that the "opponents of plays were unsuccessful playwrights

¹ Wood, *Athenae Oxon.* I, 675. See also *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.*

and players who were hired by the city authorities to write for them under a show of godliness."¹ This may possibly apply to Munday and Rankins, two of the least important of the writers; but these two alone must not prejudice one against the great opponents of the drama. That Gosson was honest in his convictions we feel sure, not because of his many references to his past sins, which could easily be fabrications of his clever wit, but because of the facts of his career. His conversion from a life of carelessness to one of serious purpose was not so conspicuous either in suddenness or in disparity of the two extremes as that of the poet Donne, whose sincerity is unquestioned. Gosson, it is true, never reached the popularity and eminence of the great London preacher. Yet from all accounts he lived an earnest and sincere life, and, from 1616 on as vicar of Alleyn's native parish, he is found corresponding with that theatrical leader in regard to St. Botolph's charities, to all appearances a useful and conscientious minister.² To regard his work, therefore, as insincere, or as inspired by anything but honorable motives, we feel to be an injustice.

This conclusion is reached with full consciousness that the character of his first attack, *The School of Abuse*, "containing," as the title page runs, "a plesaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters, and such like Caterpillers of a Commonwelth, . . . A discourse as plesant for Gentlemen that fauour learning, as profitable for all that wyll follow vertue" may seem discordant with the feelings of true penitence. He drew his authority not from the Bible, as his predecessor had done, but from pagan writers, in the style not only of the gentlemen whom he addressed, but also of the jesters whom he attacked. If he had been acquainted with his forerunner, which his words render improbable,³ he might have felt that he had exhausted the serious side of the argument. According to his own explanation, however, it was because actors were not fit to stand

¹ p. 52.² Collier, *Alleyn*, 133.³ See quotation from Dedication.

in the divine presence that he gave them instead of the word of God "a volley of prophan writers to begin the skirmish," in the endeavor "to beate them from their holdes with their owne weapons."¹ If his euphuistic style seems too witty and satirical for a reformer, and his spirit too unconcerned, we must consider not only the man's character, as we do in reading Fuller's writings, but also the spirit of the age, in which the sermons of the high court preacher, Launcelot Andrewes, were filled with strange plays on words. By so doing the sense of incongruity between his words and his professed aim, his wit and his piety, will disappear.

However that may be, as Gosson took up his pen to begin *The School of Abuse*, he felt the strangeness of his position more clearly than we perceive it. In his dedication to Sidney he apologized: "When Ovid had roaved long on the seas of wantonnesse, he became a good pilot to all that followed, and printed a carde of every daunger; and I perswade my selfe, that seeing the abuses which I reveale, trying them thorowly to my hurt, and bearing the stench of them yet in my owne nose, I may best make the frame, found the schoole, and reade the first lecture of all my selfe, to warne every man to avoyde the perill." Yet apparently this did not wholly quiet his misgivings. In addressing the reader, he returned to the apparent inconsistency of writing, as he was to do, when his "owne woorkes are dayly to be seene upon stages," with the assurance that were his constant tears of contrition for the past known, excuse would be made for him. Such seriousness, however, did not last long, and his third recognition of the strangeness of his rôle was more light-hearted.² In spite of all fear, he wrote, lest for telling tales out of that school of abuse in which he had matriculated he should be "ferruled" for his fault, or "hyssed at for a blab," nevertheless he had determined to sketch boldly the advancement there of the pupil who could take his "learning apace, and passe through every forme without revolting," and so advance from "pypping to playing, from play to

¹ p. 32.² p. 14.

pleasure, from pleasure to slouth, from slouth to sleepe, from sleepe to sinne, from sinne to death, from death too the Diuel."

So much for Gosson's spirit as he began his task, which we have indicated by quotations in order to distinguish it plainly from Northbrooke's. One was all soberness, earnestness and dignity, reverencing the good and scorning the low. The other was serious only in extreme invective and in his vivid descriptions in which still lurk a visible interest as well as horror. ~~This fundamental unlikeness in the writings of Northbrooke and Gosson, and the difference of their stations in the world, rendered Gosson's work unique not only in character but also in influence, appealing, as his own title-page suggests, to the gallant, as well as to the religious Puritan.~~

Although the writer of this pleasant invective regarded poetry, music and playing as chained together in links of abuse, he, like Northbrooke, saw good in at least the first two. But with true Elizabethan hatred of vagabondism he observed, "we have infinit poets, and pipers, and suche peevish cattle among us in Englande, that live by merrie begging, mainteyned by almes, and prively encroche upon every mans purse."¹ The entertainment offered in the theater by these idlers, "straunge consortes of melodie to tickle the eare, costly apparrell to flatter the sight, effeminate gesture to ravish the sence, and wanton speache to whette desire to inordinate lust," became a menace to virtue.² It was this contaminating influence that drove Gosson to his attack. He objected like all Puritans to playing on the Sabbath. But when he wittily told how Lucinius annually obtained an additional instalment of French tribute by dividing the year into thirteen months, as an illustration of the actor's craftiness in solemnizing each week four or five of their lawful play-days, he virtually admitted that his objection to Sunday amusements was not quite so Biblical as Northbrooke's, That the spirit of *The School of Abuse* as a whole was

¹ p. 17.

² p. 22.

thus more social than religious is plainly marked in his picture of the behavior of theatergoers.¹ "In our assemblies," he complained, "at playes in London, you shall see suche heaving and shooving, suche ytching and shouldering to sytte by women; suche care for their garments that they be not trode on; suche eyes to their lappes that no chippes lighte in them; such pillowes to their backes that they take no hurte; suche masking in their eares, I know not what; suche geving them pippins to passe the time; suche playing at foote saunt without cardes; such ticking, such toying, such smiling, such winking, and such manning them home when the sportes are ended, that it is a right comedie to marke their behaviour, to watch their conceates, as the catte for the mouse, and as good as a course at the game it selfe, to dogge them a little, or follow aloofe by the printe of their feete, and so discover by slotte where the deare taketh soyle." Certainly the author was very familiar with the play-house, and had not quite lost his former love of its pleasures. It was primarily such moral contamination that caused him to forget whatever good might lie in the exhibitions there used, and condemn utterly the whole dramatic art.

This is the general tone of *The School of Abuse*. But in one short passage Gosson admitted that, in consequence of an earnest effort on the part of the actors to purge their comedies of wanton speeches, "small are the abuses, and slight are the faultes that nowe in Theaters escape the poets pen,"² so that there were then some plays like *Catiline's Conspiracy*, that "pig of mine owne Sowe," without rebuke. Yet this passage is only by the way. If the strength of old associations momentarily weakened our Puritan's denunciations, he soon recovered himself. Even in those purged comedies he was sure that the corn was full of cockle and the drink overcharged with dregs, and that even the best of them were "not fit for every mans dyet: neither ought they commonly to be shoven."³ Not until plays were entirely

¹ p. 25.² p. 27-8.³ p. 30.

freed from their vicious elements, nor even then until an honest man or woman could take a seat in a play-house sure of an "honest neighbour" there, ought they to be allowed.

From this one is convinced that it was the moral depravity of the theater, rather than of plays themselves, that inspired his invective, and that led him to recommend their total suppression as the only course by which "the greatest storme of abuse will bee overblowne, and a faire path troden to amendment of life."¹

Already evidences are seen of the influence exerted by the Puritan attack. Gosson acknowledged that at least some actors had yielded to the demand for reform. Such amendment could have been neither decided nor extensive, but was due, undoubtedly, to the words of Alley, Grindal, Northbrooke and the rest, as well as to the fear of London's untiring and victorious opposition. The influence of *The School of Abuse*, owing no more to its popular style than to the justness of its charges, was still more noticeable. In the very year of its publication its main contention was confirmed by another work, *Newes from the North*, whose author wrote, "I have partely shewed you heere what leave and libertie the common people, namely youth, hath to followe their owne lust and desire in all wantonnes and dissolution of life; for further prooffe wherof I call to witnesse the Theaters, Courtaines, heaving houses, rifling boothes, bowling alleyes, and such places where the time is so shamefully mispent, namely the Sabaoth dayes, unto the great dishonor of God and the corruption and utter destruction of youth."² These are just Gosson's charges in brief, and with such proof of his fairness in addition to our acquaintance with the man himself, we need not wonder that the *School of Abuse* opened the real controversy, and that around it centered the hottest part of the debate over the lawfulness of stage-plays.

A year later another reformed play-poet, with remorseful confession followed the example of Gosson, though anony-

¹ p. 34.

² Halliwell-Phillips, *Outlines*, I, 344.

mously, and wrote for the overthrow of his former profession. The work was entitled, *A second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters: the one whereof was sounded by a reuerend Byshop dead long since; the other by a worshipful and zealous Gentleman now aliue: one showing the filthines of plaies in times past; the other the abomination of Theaters in the time present: both expresly prouing that that Common-weale is nigh vnto the curse of God, wherein either plaiers be made of, or Theaters maintained.* This work was licensed on the 18th of October, 1580, to Henry Denham, the publisher, but of the author we are told nothing.¹ On this point Gosson's last work against the stage, *Playes Confuted*, seems at first to throw some light. There he asserted that he had once before written against plays, "which no mā that euer wrote plaies, did, but one, who hath chāged his coppy, and turned himself like ye dog to his vomite, to plays againe."² From other sources we know that Anthony Munday had so written against plays, and later had returned to them;³ and we should assume that Gosson, himself a convert of the same time, knew of Munday's actions, and also of the *Second and Third Blast*, which appeared in London two years before his *Playes Confuted*. If we grant these two suppositions, it follows that our anonymous author was Munday himself. Both are extremely plausible. But on adding to the uncertainty the fallibility of Gosson's own statement, and the fact that Munday had already returned to the stage in 1580, it seems unwarranted to burden an already overloaded hack writer with yet another business affair. So to attribute it to him would at least be to asperse either the critical judgment or the honesty of "Anglo-phile Eutheo," who put forth the work with the recommendation that its writer was "as excellent an Autor of those vanities, as who was best."

But if the title-page tells nothing of the author, it bears witness to a point already noted concerning the circulation

¹ *S. R.* (Arber's) II, 173.

² p. 212.

³ *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.* See also chap. 6, p. 86-7.

of Northbrooke's *Treatise*. Gosson, it has been seen, regarded *The School of Abuse* as the pioneer; and now Anglo-phile, the assumed editor of these two blasts, counts the *School of Abuse* as the first blast against plays, and the words of Salvian and of the unknown writer as the second and third respectively, and furthermore asserts, "None, that I knowe, besides these Autors haue written, though manie, thanked be God, in the principal places of this land haue, and dailie, yea and openlie do speake against plaies and Theaters." May it be assumed that Northbrooke's *Treatise*, which had been written three years before, and had gone into its second edition in 1579, was unknown to those so directly interested in his subject as were Gosson and the author of the *Third Blast*? Facts would perhaps justify the conclusion.

Like Gosson, the author must have been familiar with London amusements; but his style is less interesting and unique, and, were it not for his confession, he might readily pass for some divine. He used his knowledge of the Bible with force, his talk was full of precepts like that of Salvian, and he knew the ministerial mode of exhortation and admonition. The *Second Blast* does not primarily concern us here save to illustrate once more how directly the attack on the Roman stage was adopted by the English Puritan. But the author of the *Third Blast*, as a disciple of Gosson, serves to make more plain Gosson's personality, and to express in a more typical fashion his Puritan objections against the theater. His work is more serious than its model, and more comprehensive in scope of argument. He spoke against the waste of time at plays, and the blasphemy of the actors, in which he ranked all hearers as accessories, and against the irreverent use of Bible story. Like all Englishmen he censured also the economic burdens caused by plays. "The principal end," he reminded his readers, "of all their interludes is to feede the world with sights & fond pastimes; to iuggle in good earnest the monie out of other mens purses into their owne handes."¹ For what was

¹ p. 149.

it that they returned to their patrons? "Do wee not vse in these discourses to counterfet witchcraft, charmed drinkes, & amorous potions, thereby to drawe the affections of men, & stir them vp vnto lust, to like euen those whome of them-selues they abhore. The ensamples whereof stirre vp the ignorant multitude to seeke by such vnlawful meanes the loue, & goodwil of others."¹ Thus he went even further than Gosson did in condemning plays in themselves, including in his censure the intrigue as well as the licentiousness. But when he came to consider the vileness of the drama, in which he believed that the people delighted most, and the corrupting influence of the theater, he followed Gosson closely. Both the reformed poets knew more of the evil than did Northbrooke. The character of the men and women who frequented the theater this author described as Gosson had done; according to his testimony, he himself had seen women tempted there, and the grossest licentiousness committed.² Since in this, however, he merely repeated what Gosson had spoken, we need not give it in detail.

The new and interesting part of this attack is its attempt to outline a practical movement of reform. The evil had become so deeply rooted that the author advised mild initiatory measures. The first step was for the magistrates to abolish plays on the Sabbath, "for that is the abuse which is generalie found fault withal, & allowed of none but those who are altogether destitute of the feare of God, and without conscience."³ Next, since he thought that the boldness and lawlessness of the companies was due largely to the patronage of noblemen, he recommended that the magistrates take steps to abolish that privilege.⁴ This suggestion of corrective measures is the most noteworthy thing in his attack. Though he had never heard of Northbrooke's work, his knowledge of Salvian led him to adopt much of the same line of thought; his knowledge of the play-house, and his evident respect for Gosson's work led him to emphasize most

¹ p. 143.² p. 139.³ p. 128.⁴ p. 133.

of all the corruption of the theater; yet his own personality remained distinctive.

In thus giving the inspiration to others to attack the stage, Gosson not only wrote, but founded, as he had hoped, a school of abuse. His influence in the dispute is revealed still more clearly by the commotion that his little tract produced among its adversaries. Naturally one who had forsaken his old companions and proclaimed them unworthy to appear in God's presence was denounced by them as a renegade and a hypocrite. The majority of such retorts, however, would have perished completely had not Gosson mentioned or described them in later works. Consequently, the student must return to him for much of the players' answer.

It seems certain from Gosson's words that many replies were made to him. In the *Ephemerides of Phialo*, published in 1579, the preface reads in part, "Sith it hath beene my fortune to bear sayle in a storme, since my first publishing the *Schoole of Abuse*, and too bee tossed by such as fome without reason, and threaten me death without a cause, feeling not yet my finger ake, I can not but acknowledge my safetie." Undaunted, however, he turned "to whippe out those Doggs," which had barked more at him "for writinge the *Schoole of Abuse*, than *Cerberus* did at *Hercules* for descending to Hell." In this preface, as well as in the *Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse*, nothing new was added by Gosson to the argument. In the latter, he reaffirmed his former statements—that he did not condemn good poetry, music or recreation, but only open abuses of those arts; that stage-plays, however, he regarded as a harmful pastime on account of the waste of money and the inevitable moral degradation that accompanied them. These two passages are valuable because they throw light on the history of the quarrel, and indicate the number and the animosity of the replies made to the *School of Abuse*.

Of three of these answers Gosson tells us more definitely. From him we learn the nature of a tract called *Strange*

News out of Affrik, published in October, 1579.¹ That this counter-attack was short is implied in the *Ephemerides*, but of its sober argument, if there were any, Gosson has preserved nothing. For his contempt for the "Doctour of Affrike," who, from his three-footed stool of Pythia, sent forth scurrility in support of the motto, "*Affrica semper aliquid apportat noui*," was so thorough-going that he did not deign a reply, but merely pointed "to the strawe where the Padd lurkes."

The other counter-attack is referred to by Gosson in the *Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse*. There he wrote, "Our players since I set out the *Schole of abuse*, haue trauailed to some of mine acquaintance of both Vniuersities, with fayre profers, and greater promises of rewardes, yf they woulde take so much paine as too write agaynst mee; at laste like to Penelopees suters, which seeing themselues disdained of her, were glad to encroche with some of her maiides, when neither of both Vniuersities, would heare their plea, they were driuen to flie to a weake hedge, and fight for themselues with a rotten stake. . . . It is tolde mee that they haue got one in London to write certaine *Honest excuses*, for so they tearme it, to their dishonest abuses which I reuealed." To this he added, "How he frames his excuses, I know not yet, because it is doone in hudder mudder"; and even of the identity of the "Excuser" he was not sure. The question at once arises, what was this book and who was its author. Some have confused it with Lodge's *Defence of Poetry*, and account for the misnomer by the fact that Lodge's rare and suppressed work appeared without title-page or author's name. This the editor of our reprint of the *Defence*, David Laing, thinks improbable. Lodge and Gosson were at the university at the same time, and that they were acquainted there we believe is indicated in Gosson's reference to Lodge's weakness in academic disputation.² It is true, in *Playes Confuted* he called him William Lodge; but since the *Defence* had no title-page,

¹ p. 73-4.

² *Playes Confuted*, p. 183.

such a slip was quite possible even for an acquaintance. If Gosson were thus familiar with Lodge's university career, would he have referred to him as a London man in direct contrast to a university man, and would he have said that the players were reduced to fighting for themselves? Furthermore, as Laing points out, Gosson expressly stated that the *Defence* did not come into his hands till a whole year after its privy printing,¹ and consequently several months after the publication of the *Ephemerides*. All this indicates that the *Honest Excuses* should not be confounded with the *Defence*, nor its author with Lodge, and that we must regard this as another separate reply to Gosson's *School of Abuse*.

The knowledge furnished of these two answers to Gosson's work gives no trustworthy information of their character, and nothing at all of their substance. Of the early arguments in behalf of plays, *The School of Abuse*, however, gives us a glimpse,—the argument that English comedy surpassed the old in morality because it substituted for the lewdness of pagan gods the ardent passions of young lovers destined in the end to marry; the argument that by revealing human failings comedy taught man to mend his ways; and the argument that comedy drew men's minds from mischief.² Furthermore, the *Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse* shows clearly that those who accused Gosson of condemning indiscriminately all arts were probably ready to admit that much of the existing art was evil. Thus, as we advance to the first definite reply to the Puritan opposition, we see at once that many of the arguments in defense of the drama had been current in England for some years, just as the Puritan objections to plays had long been heard on every side, and that this reply, therefore, may be taken as characteristic of them all.

It was in direct answer to Gosson that Lodge wrote *A Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage Plays*, a definite contribution to the debate under discussion, and the most

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

² *School of Abuse*, p. 21.

complete vindication of the drama that then appeared. Yet since the work was refused a license, only a few copies, without title-page or author's name, got into the hands of the public. In character the book somewhat resembles the *School of Abuse*; for its author used Gosson's method of argument and illustration from ancient authors. But his spirit was more liberal. He, too, saw the evils of the arts assailed, and replied, "Your Pipers are so odious to mee as yourselfe, nether alowe I your harpinge merve beggars." Equally frank was his admission that plays and play-houses did, as Gosson charged, lead to immorality; and he saw how deeply grounded vice was in them owing to the rule of popular taste. He regretted that play-wrights, shirking so the lessons to be taught, dared not "nowe a dayes presume so much as the old Poets might," but rather applied "ther writing to the peoples vain wheras, if in the beginning they had ruled, we should now adaies have found smal spectacles of folly."¹ He discountenanced, also, those who profaned the Sabbath day by idling at a play time which should be passed at a good sermon. The reader believes that his desire for the abolishment of these abuses was really sincere.² For all that, Lodge would leave it to the magistrates to attend to them; and since plays might be used to reprehend vice, and since they were so used in antiquity, he stood ready to give every encouragement to the dramatic art. In this his breadth of mind surpassed Gosson's; and though his life was such as to suggest that he regarded sin too lightly, perhaps only granting the abuses through necessity, and though in his arguments lay a clear insufficiency and a failure to meet the question squarely, his purpose was not wrong. Yet his direct opposition to his opponent's arguments was no more marked than the disparity between his temperament and the Puritan spirit. He saw and admitted certain evils, but was willing to temporize with them in the hope that good would come where good could come.

¹ p. 21.² p. 27.

The Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage Plays, therefore, leaves much to be desired. Art never needs a controversial defender; and in his personalities, as well as in his inappropriate use of ancient authors, Lodge failed. He had small respect for Gosson's wit, in part not without reason. Yet the mote in Gosson's eye troubled him more than the beam in his own. "Lord, with how goodly a cote haue you clothed your conceiptes, you abound in storyes but impertinent, they bewray your reeding but not your wisdom; would God they had bin well aplyed."¹ At the same time, nevertheless, Lodge was using a similarly strained method of classical interpretation; and where Gosson's are only euphuistic digressions, his appear as evasions. Lodge erred much more grievously in those passages in which he attacked Gosson's character, calling him, at least by implication, a parasite and hypocrite.² Such accusations are to be expected from a controversialist, but they show neither ability nor force in argument; and instead of tending to settle this dispute only increased the turmoil, and brought no real honor to the art Lodge sought to defend.

Lodge, in behalf of the theatrical party, replied thus to the Puritan pamphleteers with their own weapons. At the same time an answer of a different kind was returned to them. It was the drama, *The Play of Plays*, produced at the Theater on February 23d, 1581. The date of its presentation, as well as all our information concerning it, is found in Gosson's prompt rejoinder. But his description is so complete that the exact nature and purpose of the piece are determinable. Collier asserts, without explanation, that Malone, unaware of its real identity, supposed the *Play of Plays* to be a tract by Lodge.³ Malone's opinion was probably formed from Prynne, who several times refers to Lodge's *Play of Plays*, where he evidently means the *Defence*.⁴ The argument of the allegory, as given by Gosson, is this. Life and Delight are so closely related

¹ p. 19.² pp. 7, 21.³ II, 277.⁴ *Histrio-Mastix*, p. 700.

that separation means destruction to Life. Zeal, perceiving this, bridles Delight and leads Life into the wilderness of loathsomeness, where Glutte drives away Zeal and Delight and leaves Life fainting. There Life would have died had not Recreation, coming to the rescue, by soft music restored her. Tediousness is then expelled, and Life, once more allowed her choice of pleasures, selects comedy as a recreation suitable for all seasons, and "neither chargeable to ye beholders purse, nor painful to his body." Zeal is then readmitted to Life, but "pinchte in the wast," and henceforth called Moderate Zeal; and, after some restrictive measures have been forced upon comedy to insure its proper use, Delight and Moderate Zeal lead Life along the road to eternity.

The arguments of both sides have now been heard. The lesson of the *Play of Plays*, and its solemn promise to restrict comedy and purge it of its evils, may have had some influence in its necessarily restricted field in stemming the oncoming tide of Puritanism. But whatever the results of this and of Lodge's *Defence*, the main exponent of anti-Puritan opinion, may have been on individual minds, the literary warfare, unassuaged, went merrily on. Gosson had already spoken twice in rebuttal in the same serio-comic vein of the *School of Abuse*. Spurred on by the goads of his enemies, in 1582 he issued his last and most complete contribution to the discussion, *Playes Confuted in five Actions*, with the avowed purpose of answering the "cavils" of those defenders of the dramatic art, Lodge and the author of the *Play of Plays*. But though Gosson was not silenced — by his opponents, his style of writing, at any rate, was changed. Illustrations and bantering anecdotes from pagan authors yielded place almost entirely to the support of the Scriptures, the Fathers, and some more carefully chosen classic writers. His purpose, consequently, appeared more serious, and his manner more in keeping with Puritan gravity; and the new dignity so obtained harmonized well with his more careful and comprehensive argument.



Especially in the first four acts is this so, and much of it is in direct answer to Lodge and his "patchte pamphet." Gosson explained at the start the extreme position he had been accused of taking by saying that he saw in plays so much of evil that he could hope for no remedy short of total suppression; he found them "Filthy as the stables of Augia, impossible to bee cleansed before they be carried out of Englande."¹ In justification, he enumerated the subjects and personages of both tragedy and comedy, and concluded, "the best play you can picke out, is but a mixture of good and euill."² Thus he approached his opponent's main argument—the moral agency of plays. To repudiate this, Gosson argued that plays were unfit to teach moral lessons because of the place in which they were held, where no impartial judge was present to hear the accused; because of the evil lives of the actors; because of their method of instruction—a spirit of malice and scoffing; and because of the motives of dramatic rebuke—the desire for popularity or the gratification of individual spite. And that they did confer no good instruction was proved to him by the baseness of the actors, who, with their careful study of the plays, would certainly be helped more than any one else.³ Nor did he agree with Lodge that plays gave a perfect image of a thing, since they either treated of pure fiction, or altered history to suit their needs.⁴ Then, apart from Lodge's *Defence*, Gosson urged that for a boy to act the part of a woman was virtually a lie, and contrary to God's law; and, from the delight of the audience at the evil words and scenes, that plays nourished evil in the heart. He even condemned plays as a relic of heathen worship, and reminded his opponent that in dwelling so long on the antiquity of plays he had virtually admitted their idolatrous origin. Such were Gosson's later contributions to his former insufficient arguments.

Thus Gosson was forced to give a broader basis for his objection to the stage than he had before done. But that

¹ Dedication.² p. 180.³ p. 182.⁴ p. 188.

at heart it was still the same degrading and immoral influences of the theater that had first roused his feelings, is seen in the concluding act, where he returned to his old arguments. Again he laid stress on the degrading thoughts suggested by plays; on the baseness of theater haunters; and on the thriftlessness and idleness of men, who had left honest professions to adopt the actor's abominable calling. So he returned to the same old position with more unrelenting determination. He no longer recognized good, either in plays or players, public or private; and like a sturdy Puritan, called on all men to shun and detest all plays, and on actors, as they hoped for salvation, to abandon their infamous lives.

Gosson's active part in the controversy was finished with the appearance of *Playes Confuted*, and, concerning the foremost of the early Puritans, a word of summary may not be irrelevant. As Lodge soon withdrew from the quarrel in refusing to recriminate to Gosson's insults,¹ so, at the close of *Scillaes Metamorphosis* in 1599, he renounced what he had formerly so bravely defended, having determined,

To write no more, of that whence shame dooth grow:
Or tie my pen to Pennie-knaues delight,
But liue with fame, and so for fame to wright.

But Gosson until the end retained his convictions, and the reader may find in his *Pleasant Quippes for Upstart New-fangled Gentlewomen* in 1595 two contemptuous allusions to the vanity of the stage, the idling witnesses and the baubles of the fool. The St. Botolph vicar had not forgotten the enemy of his other days. That enemy, as we have said, he had approached from the social, not from the clerical wing of the Puritan party. His style, biting, clever and euphuistic, reflected his temperament; and, in seeking to please "Gentlemen that fauour learning" as well as to profit those that follow virtue, he lost, especially in the earlier treatise, the dignity and solidity of Northbrooke, or even of the author of the *Third Blast*, and forgot both mod-

¹ *Alarum against Usurers*, 1584, Dedication. *Playes Confuted*, p. 160.

eration and courtesy as his invective grew. But the truth of his position, and his vivid pictures of the evils he knew so well, make one willing to pardon his faults, and accept his writings as a distinctive and most valuable part of the controversy.

With Gosson's last words, the local debate which his first pamphlet had roused came to an end. Gosson and Lodge, as the champions of their respective causes, had met in single combat; around them their supporters had rallied, while public opinion, as we shall see, grew steadily throughout the country. Hitherto the attack on the stage had been unacrimonious even where extreme. But during the course of this debate, the Puritan temper followed the same unfortunate course that Puritanism in general took as it advanced. Puritanism and Episcopacy at first differed but slightly, both parties showing a disposition to bear and to forbear. Then gradually the Church went to one extreme in enforcing upon all absolute conformity, and the Puritans to the other in making no concessions. Thus the common ground once held by both in mutual good fellowship was left vacant, and the parties were entirely disjoined. So also it befell in the stage quarrel. At first each side had seen good in the other. But the style of bitter denunciation early resorted to made each prone to overlook the truths of the other's position, so that the fundamental discordance between the Puritan hostility to an art from which evil came, and the willingness of their opponents to endure it in the hope of better days, was made so great that all compromise was forbidden.

CHAPTER 5.

PHILIP STUBBES.

While the heated debate described in the last chapter between the parties of Gosson and Lodge was in progress, it must be borne in mind that Puritans in other fields were questioning the lawfulness of stage-plays and urging their total suppression. Gosson himself mentioned the growth of feeling against Sunday performances, as well as the general clerical and academic opposition.¹ This growth of feeling was occasioned in part by the two reformed play-poets. But equal credit must be given to other disputants, among whom no mean position is due to Philip Stubbes for his comprehensive work, *The Anatomie of Abuses: Contayning A Discoverie, or Briefe Summarie, of such Notable Vices and Imperfections, as now raigne in many Christian Countreyes of the Worlde: but (especiallie) in a verie famous Ilande called Ailgna: . . . Verie Godly, to be read of all true Christians, euerie where; but most needefull, to be regarded in Englande, etc.*"²

This *Anatomie of Abuses* was deservedly the most popular and influential book of its kind ever written, and only for this reason does it deserve the prominence here given it. For in the two hundred and eight pages of the work but six treat of stage-plays. In scope, it is a wholesale revelation of Elizabethan foibles and vices, in which Philoponus carries his interlocutor, Spudeus, from one sin to another, making plain their enormities, and citing instances of God's wrath upon the offenders. Pride was first so exposed, especially pride in apparel—the "monstrous dubblets," the costly nether-stocks and hose, the gowns and scarfs, and above all the "great ruffes and supportasies," which, with the "deuils liquore," starch, formed the props and pillars of the nether world. The many pages devoted to this subject have preserved a clear and interest-

¹ *Playes Confuted*, p. 178, 212.

² Published in August, 1583.

ing picture of the fashions of Elizabethan society. After pride, Stubbes arrayed the prevalent vices of gluttony, whoredom, covetousness, usury, swearing and the breach of the Sabbath. Only as one form of the many violations of the fourth commandment, such as that "freendly kinde of fight," that "bloody and murthering practise," football, were stage-plays included. But six pages, as has been said, were allowed this subject; yet on that very account its influence moved many whom the pure stage treatise did not reach. Gosson's work, for example, had pictured vividly the evils of the play-house, preëminently, therefore, a tract for London. Moreover, the slashing vigor of his invective must have repelled on the one hand as many of the neutrals as it attracted on the other. The appeal of the *Anatomie of Abuses*, on the contrary, was to the whole Puritan party in England. It could not be interpreted as an expression of narrow prejudice against any one abuse; on one topic or another, particularly on the matter of extravagant dress, Puritans of all degrees of strictness found their own convictions expressed. Naturally, therefore, they imbibed the author's ideas on other things; and since Stubbes wrote with the serious purpose of reforming England, with a persuasive eloquence born of the conviction of truth, he first interested and then convinced many, who, though not actually Puritans, cared for righteousness.

The Anatomie of Abuses probably carried additional weight with a certain class, because in its attitude toward the drama it took in the first edition a liberal position. The preface of that edition was careful to explain that its author did not condemn all plays. "Who seeth not," it read, "that some kind of playes, tragedies and enterluds, in their own nature are not onely of great ancientie, but also very honest and very commendable exercyses," containing matter "both of doctrine, erudition, good example, and wholesome instruction; And may be vsed, in tyme and place conuenient, as condu cible to example of life and reformation of maners." In thus commending "honest &

chast playes" as a "Godly recreation of the mind," and as a "good example of life," Stubbes advanced close to Lodge's position. Yet, strange to say, in all subsequent editions this explanatory preface was left out. Furnivall suggests that it was probably written and even printed before the body of the work, and that the author did not realize at the time how inconsistent it was with the chapters to follow. One might suppose, however, that Stubbes at the outset knew his own mind in regard to plays. Possibly, as he wrote, his convictions deepened, so that whatever predisposition he had once had to meet Lodge and other defenders of the art on their own ground passed away as he thought more of the abuse of plays. Perhaps even in the three and one half months intervening between the first and the second editions, some definite breach of the law by actors, or some signal instance of their evil influence, forced home to Stubbes the issue, and wiped away all previous inclination to liberality.

At any rate, in the second edition this preface was omitted, and the only recognition given to stage-plays was in the body of the work as the most common breach of the Lord's day. Under that abuse Stubbes wrote his chapter on "Stage-playes, and Enterluds, with their wickednes."¹ According to his analysis, stage-plays treat either of profane or sacred matter. If of the latter, they are intolerable because of their sacrilege, the word of God not having been given "to be derided and iested at, as they be in these filthie playes and enterluds on stages & scaffolds, or to be mixt and interlaced with bawdry, wanton shewes, & vncomely gestures."² If, on the other hand, they treat of profane matter, they tend to dishonor God and to nourish vice. In almost Gosson's exact words Stubbes enumerated the ordinary themes and persons of tragedy and comedy. Then, like Gosson, he showed how moral instruction could not possibly be given by an art, which, as the drama did, recalled heathen idolatry, which drew people from sermons,

¹ p. 140-146.

² p. 141.

encouraged idleness and incited the lowest passions. He confirmed Gosson's most striking descriptions of play-house manners in the words—"For prooffe whereof, but marke the flocking and running to Theaters & curtens, daylie and hourelly, night and daye, tyme and tyde, to see Playes and Enterludes, where such wanton gestures, such bawdie speaches, such laughing and fleering, such kissing and bussing, such clipping and culling, Suche winckinge and glancinge of wanton eyes, and the like, is vsed, as is wonderfull to behold. Than, these goodly pageants being done, euery mate sorts to his mate, euery one bringes another homeward of their way verye freendly, and in their secret conclaues (couertly) they play the *Sodomits*, or worse."¹ Confronted by such an evil, Stubbes, like all other Puritans, forgot the good that might in a far different society come of the drama. He utterly renounced stage-plays, and, before passing on to other breaches of the Fourth Commandment—Lords of Misrule, Maygames, church-ales, dancing and the like, exhorted all actors to abandon "that cursed kind of life" in which "goe they neuer so braue, yet are they counted and taken but for beggers." This illustrates how purely English was Stubbes' sentiment; and his Puritan bias is well expressed in his closing words: "Auoid all the vanities and deceiuable pleasures of this life; for certainly they tread the path to eternal destruction, both of body and soule for euer, to as many as obey them. For it is vnpossible to wallowe in the delights and pleasures of this World, and to lyue in ioy for euer in the Kingdom of Heauen."

Concerning the character of Stubbes much has been written. The general impression is that expressed by Wood,² that he was a rigid Calvinist, a bitter foe of Popery, and a great corrector of the vices and abuses around him. He is known, though, to have studied at both universities, and to have traveled extensively. From these travels his indisputably sharp perceptive faculties, displayed in his keen appreciation of the absurdities of English fashions,

¹ p. 144.² *Athenae Oxon*, I, 645.

gave him a fund of knowledge. Yet even in his own day the charge of narrowness was most often brought against him. Nashe was even more unjust to him. He ridiculed him as one of the Martin Mar-Prelate zealots; he told scandalous stories about his life;¹ and in his *Anatomie of Absurditye*, in 1590, he referred again to Stubbes as a man able to see only evil in the arts.² To these charges Gabriel Harvey replied in behalf of his friend, praising him for his "polished and garnished" style.³ But his modern defender, Furnivall, has done the most to clear Stubbes of the accusation of being only a "bitter, narrow-souled Puritan." That the abuse of apparel throughout the whole Tudor period was as conspicuous as Stubbes regarded it, and that the popular amusements in both city and country did lead, as Stubbes and other Puritans said, to the ruin of many innocent young persons, and to the disorder of the land, Furnivall feels confident. Therefore, in spite of Stubbes' severity, because his cause was so just, and because his spirit was not that of a railer but of an earnest reformer, Furnivall exonerates him from the old established charge of intolerance.

In this connection we were interested to find that even in theological matters Stubbes was no extremist. In the *Second Part of the Anatomie of Abuses*, which treats of the then existing defects of poor-laws, school systems, trades and such matters, Stubbes came in the last section to spiritual affairs. Though he urged strongly the need of preaching ministers, he admitted that mere "readers" were better than none at all; though he spoke firmly against the system of pluralities and non-residency, he betrayed no bitterness; though he refused bishops any superiority as to "calling" over the mere pastor, he accepted their rule, and even granted them worldly titles; and though he regarded as the true mark of a minister not his vestments, but the example of his holy life and words, those ministers, who, in a time when pastors

¹ *An Almond for a Parrat*, p. 26-7.

² I, 27-9.

³ *Pierces Supererogation*, p. 290-91.

were scarce, had forsaken their flocks through hatred of the surplice, he called unfaithful. If we consider that this was written in 1583, the year in which Whitgift was made archbishop, when the demand for strict uniformity was becoming the policy of the government, it is seen at once that Stubbes was a moderate Puritan in his opposition to the church, and not at all, as Nashe had said, a forerunner of Martin Mar-Prelate.

Owing to the comprehensiveness of its survey of the vices of English men and women, to its sincerity as well as to the picturesque interest of its style, and above all to the fact that no matter how extreme or laughable its words sometimes were, there was always behind them a real truth, *The Anatomie of Abuses* exercised an influence proportionate to its popularity.¹ In consideration of this influence, the book, though only incidentally mentioning plays, deserves to be ranked among the great treatises on the stage.

¹ The book went through four editions in two years, and in ten years a fifth was called for. It has been twice reprinted in modern editions; the last time with valuable additional matter in introductions and appendices by Dr. Furnivall. Of its influence we shall hear later, chap. 13.

CHAPTER 6.

MINOR ASPECTS OF THE CONTROVERSY OF THESE YEARS.

With the publication of the *Anatomie of Abuses*, the most important part of the Puritan literary campaign was ended. Some minor attacks, both immediately before and after the appearance of that work, may still be noted. One was issued in 1581, *A Treatise of Daunses, wherein it is showed, that they are as it were accessories and dependants (or things annexed) to whoredom: where also by the way is touched and proved, that Playes are ioyned and knit together in a ranck or rowe with them*,¹ whose author evidently looked on both amusements with the same feelings that filled Northbrooke and Stubbes. Five years later even Thomas Newton, the admirer of Seneca, issued his *Treatise touching Dyce-play and Profane gaming*. Here, however, he somewhat qualified his approval of Augustine's prohibition against the support of actors with the remark, "yet these kind of persons doe, after a sorte, let out their labour unto us, and their industrie many times is laudable."² For Newton hesitated to sanction fully the condemnations of Puritan attackers. But, significantly for us, both these tracts illustrate how aversion to other pastimes was turned to reinforce the strength of the attack on plays.

Knowing almost nothing of these works, we turn now to three other treatises, which, apparently corroborating Fleay's charge that city funds were primarily responsible for the hostile demonstration, deserve more careful attention. One was written by Anthony Munday, the actor, playwright, romance writer and Protestant pamphleteer. About the year 1579, after his travels on the Continent, and after completing the *Mirroure of Mutabilitie*, he returned to the stage, to be received, it is recorded in *The True Reporte of the Death of M. Campion*, with hisses and jeers.³

¹ See Ward, I, 460, n.

² Northbrooke, *Treatise*, p. xix.

³ *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.*

Stung by this rebuke, the *Reporte* continues, Munday wrote his ballad or pamphlet against plays, presumably the

Ringinge Retraite Couragiouslie sounded,
Wherein Plaies and Players are fytlie confounded,

entered in the *Stationers' Registers*.¹ Yet within a year, at least not later than 1580, there is good reason to believe that Munday had returned to the stage. This was Munday's share in the controversy. Undoubtedly, he was the one in Gosson's mind who had "chaged his copy" and returned again to his old career. The title of the ballad is strikingly similar to that of the anonymous blast against plays which appeared at the same time; but of the authorship of the latter this proves nothing. For this change of conviction Munday's character and despicable life furnish sufficient explanation. To be sure, Munday would have been just the one to sell his services to the magistrates. But at that time, when so many pamphleteers were already in the lists, only the most prodigal administration would have gone to the needless expense of hiring others. The hint given in the *True Reporte* furnishes, to my satisfaction at least, Munday with a motive; and when his injured pride had been somewhat mollified, he returned to the stage.

Another of the apparently insincere disputants was George Whetstone, who, in *A Touchstone for the Time*,² spoke against plays, although himself a dramatist. He was not, however, an entirely home-bred writer, subservient to popular taste. Since he had already attacked romantic plays,³ we need not be surprised to find him in this year going as far against the popular stage as did Sidney and other critics. He censured the use of plays on the Sabbath, and their "scurilytie and unchaste conveiance" at all times. Such an abuse, he thought, gave ample reason for divines to blame, and magistrates to reform them.⁴ Against the true

¹ *S. R.*, II, p. 174, Nov. 10, 1580.

² Appended to his *Mirror for Magistrates of Cities*, Date, 1584.

³ *Promos and Cassandra*, Introduction.

⁴ *Touchstone for the Time*, p. 24.

use of the art, however, he made no objection, and with no sacrifice of conviction he could still follow the dramatic muse.¹

The case of William Rankins, however, seems different. In 1587, the date of the second edition of the *School of Abuse*, he set forth, *A Mirrour of Monsters: wherein is plainly described the manifold vices, & spotted enormities, that are caused by the infectitious sight of Playes, with the description of the subtile slights of Sathan, making them his instruments.* Here surely there is no compromise. The players, whom he called monsters, "bicause vnder colour of humanitie, they present nothing but prodigious vanitie"² he compared to caterpillars, "cleaving to forward branches," and to cankers, "that cankerize Rascall youth."³ He mentioned especially their profanation of the Sabbath day.⁴ Then under an allegory he described in detail the ceremonies attending the marriage of "Fastus and Luxuria (Pride and Leacherie)" in the Chapel Adulterinum, as he designated the Theater and the Curtain.⁵ Here he set forth the evils attendant upon plays, where pride, dazzling with its pomp and pageant, reigned, pleasure enticed, and lust flourished. Maskers temporarily released from hell next appear to give entertainment. These maskers are Idleness wearing the visor of "Honest recreation"; Flattery masked as "Humaine curtesy"; and Ingratitude as "Hurting harmes"; Dissension envirored as "Friendly favour"; Blasphemy shrouded under the guise of "Godly learning"; and Impudence, representing "Modest audacity." These are the emissaries of Satan, each one the subject of a moral dissertation illustrated by numerous instances from history and fable. At the conclusion of the mask, which with its moral lessons takes up a large part of the work, "there were certain petty fellows ready, as the custom is in Maskes, to carry Torches, to inflame the harts, and inkindle theyr mindes to contende

¹ Another critic and dramatist, George Gascoigne, in *The Glasse of Gouvernement* showed much the same attitude as Whetstone's.

² Fol. 2^a.

³ Fol. 1^b-2^a.

⁴ Fol. 3^a.

⁵ Fol. 23^a.

with vertue, and wholly to be guided and lighted by vice." In this way Rankins supported his thesis that plays were contrary to the word of God, an enticement from godliness, and a delight to Satan.

In all this Rankins showed no consideration for either plays or players; but in the mask are seen premonitions of his fall. Soon he, too, forgot his bitter antipathy to the stage, and wrote comedies and tragedies regularly for Nottingham's servants at the Rose Theater. In this attack, if not in Munday's and Whetstone's, suspicion seems well grounded that Rankins was bribed by the city, and, after receiving his pay, felt his duty done. Still, other influences might have induced him to assume his show of holiness. We recall in an old play a youth, who, to win his sweetheart, was forced to feign piety; and one knows not what bit of Elizabethan romance lay at the bottom of Rankins' fleeting scruples. Be that as it may, in 1587 appropriations for stage attacks would have been a lavish waste of public funds.

The close of the secular literary warfare of the 16th century against the stage has now been reached. The works have varied in kind and interest, but all have tended to the same end. The reply made to Gosson by Lodge and his party has already been studied. New defenders sprang up at this time to answer these later attackers. Among them was Nashe in *Pierce Penilesse*. His position we find well summarized in the words:¹ "The pollicie of Playes is verie necessary, howsoeuer some shallow-braind censurers . . . mightily oppugne them." For plays, he argued, kept men from evil occupations, instructed them in the glories of English history, and, by showing the wages of sin, taught virtue. He denied the assertions of certain petitioners that plays corrupted youth, caused tumult, and, by alluring apprentices from duty, impeded business. This last point he cleverly explained as "An Article foysted in by the vintners, ale-wiues, and victuallers, who surmise,

¹ *Works*, II, 88-92.

if there were no Playes, they should haue all the companie that resort to them, lye bowzing and beere-bathing in their houses euery afternoone." The passage ends with the proud boast: "Our Players are not as the players beyond sea, a sort of squirting baudie Comedians, that haue whores and common Curtizans to play womens parts, and forbear no immodest speech or vnchast action. . . . Our Sceane is more stately furnisht than euer it was in the time of Roscius." In this eulogy, Nashe was probably sincere, since in *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem* he said nothing of plays in exposing London as "the seeded Garden of sinne."

This interesting, though unpretentious argument, had probably little influence. The Puritans were fighting for a principle, with a determination that could not be daunted by either retaliatory insults or any insufficient arguments in behalf of plays. One must look, therefore, to the more philosophical literary critics of the day to see what reasons they were able to adduce to reassure the Puritans of the eventual triumph of purity in art—the last remaining influence which could even retard the inevitable outcome of the struggle.

Of all these critics, Sir Philip Sidney deserves most our careful attention, not only because of the intrinsic merits of his *Apology for Poetry*, but also because of its slight connection with the debate which has just been described. Gosson, it is remembered, dedicated his *School of Abuse* to Sidney, and was "for hys labor scorned: if at leaste it be in the goodnesse of that nature to scorne."¹ As a sign of his contempt, Sidney is supposed by Arber to have issued immediately the *Apology for Poetry*. There are good reasons, however, to believe that it was written not earlier than 1583.² It was certainly written after the *Arcadia*, and hence not before 1581; and, if sufficient allowance is made for Sidney's change from the florid style of the romance to the chaste diction of the essay, probably not till 1583. In

¹ Arber's Introduction to *The School of Abuse*, p. 12.

² *Defense of Poesy*, ed. Cook, Introduction.

spirit, at least, it certainly does not belong to the time of heated, bitter controversy; for it is not a controversial tract. By nature Sidney was too thorough a gentleman to indulge in mean gibes at his opponent, as Lodge and others had done, and the parts of the *Apology* which may in any sense be taken as a reply to Gosson form a very small proportion of the work.¹ In the midst of his defense, he said that objection had been made chiefly to comedy, which, he admitted, "naughty play-makers and stage-keepers" had "justly made odious." He himself regretted that the comedians were accustomed to "stir laughter in sinful things, which are rather execrable than ridiculous; or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied than scorned." But seeing the evil with a critic's eye, he had for it a critic's remedy. He had no space to devote to quarreling, and his reply is well summarized in its concluding words: "I have lavished out too many words of this play-matter. I do it, because as they are excelling parts of poesy, so is there none so much used in England, and none can be more pitifully abused." This may be regarded as a reply to Gosson; but the value of the essay lies so wholly in its "positive, constructive, and critical" elements² that in the *Apology* we should look less for a rebuttal of another's arguments, than for a dignified and lofty defense of an art whose high mission Sidney sympathetically appreciated.

Other critics on poetry wrote in much the same vein. Webbe, in 1586, Puttenham, in 1589, and Harrington, in 1589, acknowledged the abuse of the drama, but saw in its proper use a strong means of moral teaching, at least for mature men. Puttenham took the extreme position, even, that "decencie" or, as we should say in regard to the *Miller's Tale*, for example, "dramatic fitness," required foul speeches and sinful acts from certain types of character. Harvey, also, in a letter to Spenser at Cambridge, showed a critic's scorn of that popular amusement, the "maltconceivid comedye" of the "freshe starteupp comedanties."³

¹ p. 26, 50-52.

² Editor's Introduction.

³ Harvey, *Letter Book*, p. 67.

In *Pierces Supererogation* he described how stately tragedy had been forced to despise the trifling comedy, and how that, in turn, was disgusted with the "new Ruffianisme" so popular in literature.¹ That there may have been more in this than mere scholarly disdain is suggested by his defense of Stubbes and Rainoldes against their slanderer.² He was a critic leaning strongly to Puritanism. More typical and more interesting, therefore, is Chettle's *Kind-hartes Dreame*,³ where the shade of Tarleton first with mock sympathy burlesques the Puritan argument, and then enters upon a serious vindication of the art in which the evil is far outweighed by the good.

Such opinions were undoubtedly common to a great many Englishmen of the time, who, because of their retired mode of life or their scholarly love of classical literature, saw not, or were willing to endure, the evils of the stage. Nevertheless, it was not the opinion of such men that told on the events of the next few years. Their view may seem to-day sane and liberal. But when we hear Gosson and all other attackers assert that people went to plays not to learn to abhor evil, but rather to applaud with delight the representations of vice, and when we hear their testimony on the atmosphere of the play-house virtually corroborated by Jonson and other playwrights, we see that it was not a practical view.⁴ Since the stage, moreover, was swayed largely by the tastes of the masses, such criticism had little influence in raising the standard of the theater; and since opposition to plays came largely from the practical middle classes, who cared little for critical judgment, it did as little, on the other hand, in stemming the current of public opinion. In spite, therefore, of the interest felt in these early critical essays, in spite even of the lasting merits of Sidney's *Apology*, we may count these attempts among the minor aspects of the literary quarrel over the 16th century theater.

¹ Harvey, *Works*, II, 218.

² *Ibid.*, II, 290-1.

³ p. 63.

⁴ Jonson, *Silent Woman*, IV, 2, fully confirms Gosson's account of the behavior of play-goers. See also *The Devil is an Ass*, I, 3; II, 1.

CHAPTER 7.

THE ACADEMIC DISPUTE.

Having carried the secular literary warfare against the stage through its first and most heated period, we shall trace the quarrel as it made itself a part of university thought in the last decade of the 16th century. The question was not essentially different there from elsewhere. The question of private plays of course took precedence, and as a rule, the theatrical party made no attempt to defend the popular stage. Yet in seeking to prove or disprove the kinship of private and public exhibitions, the spirit, whatever the methods, of the controversy was not essentially new. Some of the early Puritans, it is remembered, had been disposed to allow amateur theatricals—Northbrooke, North, and even Stubbes, at first writing; for those plays could be more closely guarded against the social and moral dangers of public performances. But even in university circles an aversion to plays early arose, traces of which we have already noted. On various grounds academic plays were thought to be contrary to the teaching of Scripture, while from public plays the danger of infection and disorder was not unfelt. So although at Oxford, the main seat of the academic dispute, the question was limited largely to private plays, from Cambridge was heard the protest, chastened by academic dignity, to be sure, against the common players, a proof that only new conditions, and not a new spirit, gave the academic controversy its peculiar shade.¹

Illustrative of this later scholastic sentiment against common plays we find several complaints from Cambridge. In 1575 and again in 1593, the Council felt called upon to remind the Vice-Chancellor of the need of keeping undefiled the seats of learning, and to forbid all "plays, or enterludes of

¹ *Plays Confuted*, p. 211, explains this diminution of vehemence. For early scholastic opposition, see chap. 2, d.

common players" either in the college itself or in any adjacent town.¹ The trouble, however, could not be so easily quelled. In 1592, Vice-Chancellor Some, citing this order with manifest solicitude for the abolition of plays, complained of the remissness of the constables in the matter.² Again in 1593, the dread that the London plague might be carried to Cambridge by the players led to a renewal of the complaint and petition.³ Since Cambridge, moreover, harbored a strong Puritan element, there was decidedly more moral feeling there than is revealed in these records.⁴ This sentiment reached out as well to private as to public plays; for they too had proved themselves a nuisance. For example, it was necessary for Vice-Chancellor John Hatcher, in 1579, to report to Lord Burleigh the "controversy between Mr. Drywood, of Trinity, and one Punter, a student of St. John's, Cambridge"—the names are delightfully suggestive—and "the misconduct of the latter at the stage-plays at Caius College and Trinity."⁵ So although in Harrington's day the "wyser" sort thought that there might be good in well-penned comedies and tragedies, the "presyser sort" condemned them altogether.⁶

These Cambridge documents re-echo largely London sentiment against the common players. Toward private plays, owing to their great popularity there, sentiment crystallized at Oxford rather than at the sister university; and as a distinct branch of the general controversy, its expression deserves a careful study. The student hears first from the defendants. John Case, writing in 1585 on Aristotle's *Ethics*, put in permanent form the arguments which were then the common defense of the theatrical party.⁷ Plays were of two kinds, he said—public plays, which were scurrilous and unlawful, and academic plays, which, as an honest training and recreation, were allowable. Even the staunchest defenders of college plays so renounced, willingly

¹ Collier, I, 288-9.

² Ibid., 290-2.

³ Strype, *Annals*, IV, 228-9.

⁴ See Neal, I, 367.

⁵ *State Papers*, 1579, p. 638.

⁶ *Nugae Antiquae*, I, 191.

⁷ Lib. IV, p. 307.

or through policy, other plays, to concentrate their strength where they were most concerned. In relation to the falsity of art, Case showed that it was no more untrue to act the part of a king than to paint his form on canvas. And though he realized the force of the Fathers' objections against the idolatry of the Roman theater, the validity of their position he believed had died with paganism. Then coming closer to the real issue,¹ he explained away the long standing objection against the wearing of women's clothes by actors, on the ground that it was wrong only to put on the customs of a wicked woman. Thus he set aside the fundamental objections against the stage; and those accidental objections caused by its misuse he refused to consider against the harmless exhibitions at Oxford. Case turned his attention but momentarily to the subject; but he expressed in brief the current views of his party, and from him an idea is gained at the start of the distinguishing elements of this academic quarrel.

Since Case merely reflected the characteristic university opinions, his work does not form a part of the great debate that soon arose at Oxford. In 1591 John Rainoldes, the learned theologian, expressed publicly, and also in writing to a friend, Thornton, his disapproval of a play written by William Gager, the Latin dramatist of Christ's College. Gager, hearing of this, sent Rainoldes a copy of his new play, *Meleager*, together with a defense of academical exhibitions. Rainoldes at once replied, using Gager's own play, the *Rivales*, as a basis for his criticism of the excessive indulgence in plays at Oxford, especially at Christ's College. His opponent, weary of the publicity of the affair, wrote one more letter asking that the question be dropped. With this Rainoldes did not comply, but in May, 1593, issued his second response, stronger even than its predecessor. At this time, Gager's friend, Gentili, an Italian by birth and one of the foremost authorities on international law, came to

¹ "Non est indecorum, si eo fiat vt vitia meretricis depingantur: non est enim monstrum vestes, sed mores meretricis induere."

his defense, writing two letters in behalf of academical plays, which in July, 1593, were met by a final rejoinder from Rainoldes. So sharp was the discussion that all the university undoubtedly talked of it, and, though unpublished till 1599, it must have spread through much of the country. Gager's share did not even then appear, but as his arguments are found imbedded in Rainoldes' *Th' Overthrow of Stage-Plays, By the way of controversie betwixt D. Gager and D. Rainoldes,* a complete view of the famous quarrel is preserved in that volume.¹

Rainoldes had long been an opponent of the stage. "Many yeares agoe" he had expressed his views on the subject,² and, as we understand, had with a friend preached publicly against plays.³ The question, therefore, was not new in 1592, nor was he the only champion; many others, also, objected to the scenes of love and drinking in the *Rivales*.⁴ Since the defense had voluntarily renounced public plays, the main concern of the aggressors was to prove the close affinity between them and amateur productions.⁵ To this end, many new points were introduced into the argument. In answer to Gager, Rainoldes proved, from ancient Roman law and from analogy, that men who played for pleasure were in no wise excluded from the general infamy of those who played for gain, and that plays at Oxford caused a vain expenditure of money and a diminution in almsgiving. He furthermore replied that Oxonians endeavored to act their parts, and, therefore, whether they succeeded or not, could not be excused on the ground that they merely recited.⁶ And that they played with no lewd intent, and neither often nor in public, did not render more tolerable their plots, which so closely resembled those of common plays. It was, however, the Mosaic law forbidding persons of one sex to put on the garments of the other on which Rainoldes rested the burden of his proof that pub-

¹ For the historical facts of this dispute not to be found in the *Overthrow*, we have used the *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.*

² *Overthrow*, p. i. ³ p. 40-1, 48. ⁴ p. 25. ⁵ p. 4-8. ⁶ p. 76.

lic and private plays were equally repugnant to the spirit of God's law.

It is this argument on apparel, the most characteristic part of the controversy, and the best exposition of the matter to be found, which we wish to outline. Gager had set aside as irrelevant the Mosaic law. He believed that in some cases, to save one's life, for example, or to benefit others, a disguise of sex was lawful; and that only where the disguise was made with ill intent did it become wrong. Furthermore, he hesitated to call the temporary use of feminine attire for theatrical purposes a wearing of the same, pointing out that the chief objection to such an exchange when the law was given—its idolatry as a part of heathen worship—was no longer valid. Toward the end of the controversy, Gentili continued the argument in the same strain, agreeing with Case that the law could not be read literally, since such an act would never have been designated by the Lord an "abomination," a term used only in reference to the most heinous sins.¹

Rainoldes' replies are characteristic of the method of the whole book. He pointed out that the Jewish law against the change of apparel was moral, not ceremonial; that Christ's teachings never had set aside such a law; and that consequently under no circumstances could they be set aside by man.² Gager's illustrations from the experiences of Amyntas and Achilles aroused only his scorn; he stated absolutely that even to save his life a man should not put on the clothing of a woman. When Gager demurred on the ground that a moral law never went against "love and charity"—that is, against a man's deepest interests—Rainoldes answered that the moral statute of the seventh commandment clearly went against love and charity when to obey it Joseph was obliged to risk both liberty and life.³ Such laws, he reaffirmed, admitted of neither abeyance nor exception. But even were exception lawful in those exigencies suggested by Gager, no reason appeared why they

¹ p. 170.² p. 9.³ p. 82-4.

should be set aside for the players' sake.¹ To Gager's second point Rainoldes replied that a man's intent in wearing clothes was of no account; otherwise a man, provided his heart was right, could pray in church with his French hood on.² The third main position, that it could not be said to be wearing woman's attire to use it temporarily for stage costume, was thus met. When the Bible records that David put on Saul's armor, which he did but once, and then only for a short time, the same word is used that is found in the law on the putting on of woman's clothing. Hence, Rainoldes argued, the law must apply to even temporary uses. This Biblical proof he substantiated by a bit of reasoning characteristic of the disputants' general method. If the wearing of a garment for a single time did not count, then Nero, who according to historians never used the same garment twice, wore no clothing at all.³ The arguments of Gentili he met in the same way. Since the word "abominatio" was used to designate such transgressions as the use of blemished cattle for sacrifices, it might therefore be applied to a sin no greater than that in question.⁴ The determination of such matters, he insisted, belonged only to the trained theologian—virtually a request to the lawyer to attend to his own affairs. Thus Rainoldes turned away the objections against a strict interpretation of the Mosaic law; urging that not merely because it was a moral law should it be obeyed, though that was ample reason, but because it was so evidently justified by the vicious habits and ardent passions which grew both in actors and spectators from the use of female apparel for theatrical costumes.⁵

This was the main battle ground at Oxford. Because neither the station nor the course of life of these disputants was widely sundered, there was not the ill feeling involved that marked the London controversy. Naturally, as the debate went on, personal recriminations entered in. Gager took offense when his opponent styled all actors infamous, and, regarding it as a personal insult against himself and

¹ p. 55.² p. 15.³ p. 102.⁴ p. 181-2.⁵ 96 et seq.

his fellows, would not be pacified on Rainoldes' assurance that, since a particular judgment belonged alone to the "searcher of hearts and reines," he spoke only against actors in general, not against *those* actors at Oxford, and never even insinuated that in some cases an actor might not be worthy.¹ On the other hand, Rainoldes objected to his adversary's application of the term Momus, in the sense of carper, to men of his position, and failed to understand Gager's denial of any personal reflections in the word. The same sort of quibbling and dialectic argument raged over certain other points of the dispute—as the exact implication of the Roman prætor's decree against actors, and its proper application to English life.² Thus a large part of the work is filled with the Katy-did and Katy-didn't of old-fashioned disputation, a situation made humorous by the seriousness with which each side brought forward its proofs and analogies from all strange sources, each one seeing the "seele evasions" only of the other. At times they lost their tempers; and once Rainoldes adopted the characteristic banter of the popular pamphlet. "You are a merry man," he said, "and not much vnlike in this respect to one, who when hee had taken vp a waster and buckler in Cheapside at London to play with an apprentice, & the apprentice rapped him, sometime vpon the head, sometime vpon the elbow, or shoulder or side, he cast them downe againe; saying, that *if he had thought that the apprentice would not haue stroken vpon his buckler still, hee would not haue plaid with him.*"³ But in the end all animosities were forgotten. Rainoldes, with assurances of good will on his part, accepted Gager's peace offering; and, acknowledging their mutual agreement in regard to plays in general, assured him that if he would but remember the fundamental principle, "the generall doth evermore comprise the speciall," there would be no further disagreement.

As to the results of the controversy it is hard to speak. Common plays had already been banned by the university,

¹ p. 43.² p. 61.³ p. 89.

and now school-plays were called in question. Gager was firmly convinced from the applause that had greeted his *Rivales* that the majority of the college stood with him; but Rainoldes cleverly made the point that they might have clapped at what their hearts did not approve, or even that they might at the time have been applauding something else.¹ This astute bit of reasoning must have had great effect on Gager, especially since he had already been shown how many objected to the scenes of drunkenness in the *Rivales*. One must not interpret his request to his opponent to forbear as a sign of unconditional surrender. Nevertheless, it may indicate a sense of the weakness of his cause.² So Gager, perhaps, was led to that general retraction described by the printer in his address to the reader. There, although he admitted that Gager had "said more for the defence of Plaies then can bee well said againe by any man that shall succede or come after him," he proclaimed that that combatant, notwithstanding, had been so badly worsted that he had "let goe his hold, and in a Christian modestie and humility yeelded to the truth, and quite altered his iudgement."

Thus ends Oxford's active participation in the Puritan campaign. In its method it differed widely from the style of sweeping imputation and denunciation that had prevailed in the popular pamphlets. At bottom, however, it was the same old Puritan question. The arguments in regard to women's apparel, we shall see, were carefully studied at the request of Ben Jonson by the great scholar John Selden, who reached the same conclusion that Case had come to, namely, that the Jews' sole objection to the exchange of apparel by the sexes—its connection with pagan worship—was no longer valid, and that the text, therefore, had no application to the stage.³ Here we see the definitely academic side of the controversy reaching into the world of London. The printer, recognizing such a kindred spirit and community of interests between the two wings of the Puritan

¹ p. 151.² Rainoldes refers to this request on p. 29.³ Selden, *Works*, II, 1690-96. See also *De Venere Syriaca*, II, 366-7.

party, spoke gratefully of those "sundry fruitfull treatises" of his own age. On the other side, the Puritans of the busy world hailed with delight Th' Overthrow of Stage-Playes. Prynne, himself, could not say enough in praise of Rainoldes, who had so beaten the three defenders of Oxford plays that they "were glad to yeeld the wasters to him, to change their opinions, . . . & set downe with losse."¹ And all agreed with the Printer that the arguments of Rainoldes were so universally applicable that all England could profit by them, and even such hardened sinners brought thereby to repentance as "the gentlewoman that sware by her troth, That shee was as much edified at a play as ever shee was at any sermon."

¹ *Histrio-Mastix*, p. 700.

CHAPTER 8.

THE THEOLOGICAL ATTACK.

We have now considered the Puritan controversial literature in all its various forms—the sermon-like *Treatise* of Northbrooke, the rattling musketry of wit, pleasantry and invective of the Gosson-Lodge debate, the passing references in larger works, the attitude of the critics, and lastly the academic disputation over private plays. The controversial attack is thus carried up to the close of the century. During the same period a still more powerful influence was operative in persuading the people to abandon their amusement. In Puritan England the ascendancy of the nonconforming divines in regulating conduct and in building character can not be overestimated; and although most of their pulpit utterances have perished, there exists plenty of evidence that throughout the period of opposition that power was turned against the theater. There is evidence in Laneham's letter of 1575 that the clergy, whose writings have already been studied, had made a successful campaign against Leicester's Hock Tuesday play. From Northbrooke's statement,¹ "Preachers are as dumme [as the magistrates] to speake and saye in a pulpitte againste it" [the stage], we may infer that previous to that time, as we ourselves concluded from examining the writings of churchmen, the pastors had not long concerned themselves with the growing evil.² There is even evidence that the people resented any such interference from the pulpit. Gosson wrote: "If any of thē shoulde write againste playes, that occupy your pulpits with learned sermons, whose knowledge and authority heerein is great. If, I say, they shoulde speake but one worde against ye sleepe-nes of Magistrats which in this case is necessary to bee touchte, they shall seeme streight to swerue from the texte, to speake without booke, and to vtter a greate deale more

¹ *Treatise*, p. 103.

² See chapter 2, pp. 42-3.

then needs."¹ Here, even more explicitly than by Laneham, is it said that pulpit references to the stage were regarded as digressions. But after the year 1576, when the first play-houses were built, there is every indication that the ministers took an active and influential part in the crusade against the theater.

The earliest of these pulpit attacks which has come down to us was preached by Thomas White at Paul's Cross, December 9th, 1576, about the time that our first treatise was written.² White was no narrow bigot; he was well educated and cultured, the liberal benefactor who established at Oxford the White professorship, and founded Sion College. On that Sunday his sermon at Paul's Cross on the vices of London treated especially the subject of stage-plays. In it White attacked the common violation of the Lord's day; but not that alone. "Looke but upon the common playes in London," he exclaimed, "and see the multitude that flocketh to them and followeth them: beholde the sumptuous Theatre houses, a continuall monument of London's prodigalitie and folly." Then with the syllogistic reasoning, "the cause of plagues is sinne, . . . and the cause of sinne are playes: therefore the cause of plagues are playes," an assertion that found ready belief, he continued: "More horrible enormities, and swelling sins, are set out by those Stages then every man thinks for, or some would believe, if I shold paint them out in their colours." He closed with the warning that unless the stage was suppressed in time, it would "make such a Tragedie" that all London might well mourn.

A similar sermon was preached in the same place two years later by the celebrated and powerful preacher, John Stockwood.³ His attack is valuable for us because it shows that by 1578 ministers had entered in earnest into the controversy. The preacher asked, "What should I speake of

¹ *Playes Confuted*, p. 212.

² See Collier, I, 229-230. Sermon repeated the next year.

³ *Outlines*, I, 345, 328. Also Arber's *School of Abuse*, p. 9.

beastlye playes againste which out of this place [Paul's Cross] every man crieth out?" In his attack he singled out "that gorgeous playing place," the Theater, for its corruption, saying, "Have we not houses of purpose built with great charges for the maintainance of them [plays], and that without the Liberties, as who woulde say,—there, let them saye what they will say, we wil play." But their disregard of the Sabbath was the chief cause of his anger. "Wyll not a fylthye playe," he complained, "wyth the blast of a trumpette sooner call thyther a thousande than an houres tolling of a bell bring to the sermon a hundred," so that on the Lord's day the theaters were thronged, while in some places the actors dared even "in ye time of diuine service, to come and daunce aboute the Church."¹ His conclusion was that if Sabbath playing was the Lord's business all right, but if not—and no one, he thought, was so "voide of knowledge" as to think otherwise—it was wrong.

1579 A year later Spark in his Rehearsal Sermon at Paul's Cross called the theater the "sinke of al sinne."² The next sermon, however, whose substance we know much about was delivered in 1583 by John Field. This Puritanical preacher had once suffered imprisonment, and had been released only through the intercession of Lord Leicester. To his benefactor Field expressed his gratitude, but at the same time could not refrain from warning him to be careful how he patronized plays "to the great grieffe of all the godly." If in 1581 his heart was so filled with the subject that he could not write a letter of thanks without uttering it, we need not be surprised that in 1583 he delivered his *Godly Exhortation by occasion of the late judgement of God shewed at Paris Garden . . . where were assembled by estimation above a thousand persons, where of some were slain, and of that number at the least, as is credibly reported, the third person maimed and hurt.* In connection with this accident at the Bear Garden, Field attacked the play-houses

¹ Fleay (p. 50) finds here reference to a specific play.

² See marginal note on p. 1 of the *Third Blast*.

in the Liberties, and, after praising the London Corporation for stopping the performances on Sundays, urged their total abolition, lest God should again visit the people, this time at the play-house, and lest their souls as well as their bodies should be lost.¹

Besides these four sermons many more on the same subject were delivered in these years. Stockwood commented on the frequency of such utterances; Gosson and the author of the *Third Blast* bore similar testimony;² Whetstone in 1584 sanctioned them without reserve;³ and before 1593 the Cambridge pulpits re-echoed the words of the Paul's Cross preachers.⁴ Moreover, many another sermon, like that of Knewstubs at Paul's Cross in 1576 against the city's lack of sobriety and temperance, must have been understood by all its hearers to have reference to the stage. We have every reason to believe that the London pulpits uttered constant warnings against the temptations of the play-house; and from the spirit of the times, we know how influential those warnings were.

The conception obtained from such sermons of the clerical attitude toward the stage can be supplemented by the books of practical piety written by divines. For if we trust Gosson that men were more willing to speak than to write against the stage,⁵ we may fairly assume that those who wrote against the evil denounced it in public. Thus in 1588 Gervase Babington, one of Elizabeth's most prominent and respected bishops, in his work on the Ten Commandments spoke of plays as vanities and venomous corruptions, and of theatricals in private houses as greater temptations to virtue than stage-exhibitions. With recognition and entire approval of the Puritan attack, he referred his readers to those who had written "largely and well" against plays.⁶

¹ Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix*, p. 557, quotes Field's words.

² *Playes Confuted*, p. 168, 203, 211; *Third Blast*, To the Reader; Also *The Puritan*, Act I, sc. 4.

³ *Touchstone for the Time*, p. 24.

⁴ *Overthrow*, 40-1.

⁵ *Playes Confuted*, p. 212.

⁶ Extracts given in Furnivall's edition of the *Anatomic of Abuses*.

Here we see the alliance between the Puritan pamphleteers and the ministers—how both were fighting for a common cause.

Another such writer was William Perkins. His Cases of Conscience, in 1595, although written in his quiet, ministerial style, uncolored for the most part by illustrations of the sins mentioned, spoke nevertheless against plays.¹ He objected to the use of Bible story on the stage, to the making of amusement of the sins of men, and to the assignment of women's parts to boys. The testimony of this prominent and popular Puritan theologian, whose street name in his wild youth had been "drunken Perkins," may carry some weight. In the same year Nicholas Bownd issued his famous treatise on the Sabbath, which introduced the first point of doctrine to separate the two churches. From his belief there stated, that a seventh part of man's time should be devoted to God's service, he naturally objected to a Sabbath pastime which had been condemned by Henry VIII and also by James (a later edition adds), which had been visited by God's vengeance, and which led to the waste of men's lives.² To be sure, he sanctioned lawful recreation on week-days, and did not specifically exclude stage-plays from their number. It is plain, nevertheless, that the excessive indulgence in them at any time would have met his condemnation. The same objection was made the next year in Norden's Progress of Piety to plays and other diversions where people "lose their time, consume their thrift, and offend the laws of God and her majesty. And the sabbath day, which should be sanctified with prayer and hearing of the word, is profaned with these accustomed evils."³ We see, then, the influence of the Sabbath question. In the same spirit, Lewis Bayly in the famous Practice of Piety, and Daniel Dyke, expressed their condemnation;⁴ and Thomas Beard, after citing instances of God's wrath against playgoers, condemned both public and private plays, "which have no other

¹ p. 343.

² pp. 257, 263, 267-9, 271.

³ p. 177.

⁴ *Practice of Piety*, p. 169; *Michael and the Dragon*, date 1615, p. 216.

(use in the world but to deprave and corrupt good manners, and to open a door to all uncleanness."¹

These references are sufficient to show the attitude which the church at this time maintained against the stage. Their arguments were much the same as those of the Puritan pamphleteers—the social objections against the waste of time and money; the religious objection against the violation of the Sabbath; and preëminently the moral objection.

They may have worked often upon the people's fears, in holding up the plague and the Paris Garden disaster as judgments of God upon theater-goers; but they did it honestly and sincerely. Whether in their sermons or their writings, they spoke always as earnest, practical men against a real and growing abuse, and they had, in consequence, great influence on the conduct and character of their many admirers.

¹ *Theatre of Gods Judgements*, 1597, pp. 147, 150; Book 2, chap. 36, pp. 289-90.

CHAPTER 9.

INDICATIONS OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT, WITH FURTHER CAUSES FOR ITS GROWTH.

Thus in addition to what we may call the secular opposition to the stage, and equal in importance with it, must be ranked the opposition of clergymen in their addresses and in their literature. The two parties advanced from different quarters with different weapons, but their motives and their cause were one. The peculiarity, however, of the English movement was the popular support given it. Hence it is not sufficient to study the attitude of the leaders. We must look also for indications of feeling among the people at large, feeling molded by the words of the men already studied, but expressive in itself of the growth and extent of the movement against the English theater.

Although the growth of public feeling against the drama was marked, there were still signs at the close of the 16th century indicating, especially in the country, its tardy diffusion. The records have been preserved of a payment made in 1584 to Sir Thomas Lucy's players, and another record of that nobleman's patronage of players I find under 1633.¹ Here we see that even at the time when the attack was well under way, this "grim old Puritan" had under his patronage a company of wandering actors. Furthermore, the good repute in which Henslowe and Alleyn were always held by the people of their vestry in London, Henslowe being elected vestryman in 1607, and both being trusted in the same year to take part in deliberations for the improvement of the parish,² show that the full hate of Puritanism had not as yet developed. Perhaps this was due somewhat to signs of improvement among the actors. Stowe noted that the players, who "of former times were very poore and ignorant," had in 1583 grown to be so skilled as to win the

¹ See *Athenaeum*, Feb. 12th, 1887, p. 232; for the record of 1633 see *State Papers*, p. 47.

² Harrison, *Description*, II, vi.

patronage of great lords, and even of the Queen herself.¹ Accordingly, the hope may not have been unusual that art at last was to take the lofty throne reserved for it.

These, however, are but isolated examples, contrary to the trend of Puritanism. The general sentiment against plays that had arisen early in England on grounds quite apart from moral considerations—the dangers of the plague, the waste of money, the interruption of labor, and the general disorder—never had an opportunity of abating. All these objections continued till 1642, bringing many people into the ranks of the Puritan opposition who on purely moral grounds would never have seriously condemned the stage. There was good cause for such feeling, as all evidence indicates. Even Tarleton, the jester, made frequent reference to the disorders around the Theater; of which by way of illustration may be quoted: "Upon Whitson monday last I would needs to the Theatre to a play, where when I came, I founde such concourse of unrulye people, that I thought it better solitary to walk in the fields, then to intermeddle myselfe amongst such a great presse."² A few of these non-moral objections could never ally themselves with moral considerations. Farley, for example, complained of the expenditure of money on the theater more because it lessened the contributions for the repair of Paul's steeple than for any more pious motive. Nevertheless, the main part of the strength of these non-moral feelings lay at the disposal of those who objected to the stage on religious grounds, and, as used by them at every possible opportunity, extended their influence on men not at heart much concerned for morality, and won them recognition in legislative bodies and even in the Queen's own Council.

These partly moral, but primarily social, objections to the theater came from all quarters, even from the ranks of the dramatic leaders. Alleyn, owner of the Theater, leased the building to Burbage in 1596 or 1597 for twenty-one years, with the provision, as he and another testified in the law-

¹ *Annals*, p. 698.

² *Newes out of Purgatorie*, p. 54, date 1590.

suit that arose over the title to the property, that it should be used for theatrical purposes for only five years more. For Alleyn, seeing "that many inconveniences and abuses did growe thereby," preferred "to convert the wood and timber therof to some better use."¹ His objection to the theater was purely local, to be sure, since in 1600 he built the Fortune; nevertheless his action is positive proof that the district in which his play-house stood demanded an abatement of the nuisance.

Alleyn's recognition of this evil is perhaps less striking because, as one of the leading men of his parish, the general welfare of the community rested to a certain extent on him. Yet many, also, not in public life, occupied wholly in dramatic interests, made the same admissions. In Robert Greene's *Quippe for an upstart Courtier*² the narrator tells of a dispute between Cloth Breeches, standing for the ancient gentility and yeomanry, and Velvet Breeches, upholding the upstart fops, a dispute which became so bitter that he had to part them. To adjudge their respective merits both agreed to have a jury summoned from the passers-by. In spite of frequent challenges twenty-three men were chosen, but to complete the panel proved a serious problem. After much trouble, a poet, a player and a musician were seen approaching. The first was rejected by Velvet Breeches as too proud of his wit. And Cloth Breeches, though he had just professed himself no lover of Puritans or such as raise up new "schismes and heresies," challenged the player. They, he explained, were "too hūble, for they be so lowly, that they be base minded: I mean not in their lookes or apparell, for so they be Peacockes and painted asses, but in their course of life, for they care not how they get crowns." And although inclined to pardon their faults and follies in gratitude for the hours of enjoyment their entertainment had given him, he concluded, "Such a plaine country fellow as my selfe, they bring in as clownes and fooles

¹ *Outlines*, I, 322-4.

² *Works*, vol. XI; also *Harleian Misc.*, V, 393-421.

to laugh at in their play, whereas they get by vs, and of our almes the proudest of them all doth liue. Well, to be breefe, let him trot to the stage, for he shall be none of the Iury." How much distrust was then felt in the reliability of theatrical people, we do not know. Northbrooke had commended those ancient prohibitions against the acceptance of actors as either accusers or witnesses;¹ and in 1633, when the quarrel was nearing its close, a witness was challenged on the score of being a play haunter.² Probably there was considerable feeling against the responsibility of such witnesses, and although our sturdy yeoman, Cloth Breeches, disavowed all sympathy with schismatics, his feelings, due somewhat to injured pride, made him in this respect a Puritan.

Greene, of course, was far from being a Puritan, or from wishing plays abolished. Still, it is perfectly clear that he was conscious of their evil. In *Neuer too Late*, written in 1590, the Palmer who sought to acquaint the gentleman Francesco with the efficacy of the dramatic art in the suppression of folly, was forced to admit that, owing to the satirical invectives of the players, and to their pride and insolence, the profession had fallen in esteem.³ So even where Greene turned to defend his profession, he admitted three of the Puritan accusations against it. These troublesome misgivings were no longer concealed as his end drew near. In his *Repentance* he regretfully confessed, as he urged his former companions to reform,⁴ that in following the stage he had drawn away from God, and had become like a "child of perdition."

Since this is just the result that Puritans asserted came of associations with theatrical life, Greene's admissions are noteworthy. A similar recognition of the dangerous social atmosphere of the play-house is found in that dramatist from whom we should least expect it. In Dekker's *Seven*

¹ *Treatise*, p. 98.

² See chap. 16, p. 182.

³ Part II, p. 129-33, Greene's *Works*, VIII.

⁴ *Repentance of Robert Greene*, XII, 177-8.

Deadly Sins of London there is a "scheme" or outline representing the triumphs of the allegorical representations of the seven sins. In this scheme the figures attending Sloth are, "Anglers, Dumb Ministers, Players, Exchange wenches, Gamsters, Panders, whores and Fidlers"; for Sloth was the friend of the players, who filled their houses with idle tobacco smokers, and had promised to come in person to "sit in the two-pennie galleries amongst the Gentlemen, and see their Knaueries and their pastimes."¹ It may be pertinent here to allude to the old play in which the father of one of the low characters is the keeper of the town stage.² Without this, however, sufficient illustration has been given to show that even personal interest and associations could not blind the players and their friends to the menacing conditions of the English stage, which, as Greene at last saw, were vitally related to morality.

Other instances of more outright recognition of the moral evils caused by plays can be found. We may mention Anthony Babington's Complaint, in which that criminal, as he awaits execution, confesses the time that he has wasted with evil companions at the play-house.³ In 1592, the Court of Aldermen complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury of the players for drawing apprentices from their work, for calling together so many wicked persons to one spot, and for corrupting youth.⁴ The intimate connection between the play-house and brothels was often noted;⁵ and here again in Middleton we find a dramatist ready to admit the immorality and theft practiced in the sixpenny rooms connected with the theaters.⁶ The growth of rural feeling is indicated in the old play, The Return from Parnassus, where playing is called "the basest trade," and where the penniless scholars decide⁷

¹ p. 32-3.

² *A Looking Glass for London and England*, by Lodge and Greene, Act I.

³ *Outlines*, I, 344.

⁴ *Remembrancia*, p. 352-4.

⁵ *Outlines*, I, 344-5, refers to Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse*, 1592; *Skiaetheia*, 1598; and West's *Court of Conscience*.

⁶ *Black Book, A Moral*, p. 41.

⁷ IV, 3, l. 1886; V, 1, l. 1955.

Better it is mongst fidlers to be chiefe,
Then at (a) plaiers trencher beg reliefe.

Even men like Harrington and the author whom he quotes, though speaking in defense of plays, were forced to admit that moral evil came of them.¹ But the most interesting of these passing allusions to the stage is found in Thomas Twyne's *Phisicke for Fortune*, a translation from the Latin of Francis Petrarch, whom Prynne later so warmly praised. This work mentions the new houses in the Liberties in the following dialogue between Joy and Reason:²

Joy. "I am delyghted with sundrie Shewes."

Reason. "Perhaps with the Curteine or Theater: which two places are well knowen to be enimies to good manners: for looke who goeth thyther evyl, returneth worse. For that iourney is vnknown to the good, whiche yf any vnder-take vppon ignoraunce, he can not choose but be defyled."

II In this period certain definite influences, influences, too, with wide appeal, were steadily at work spreading the hostility toward plays among the sober class of people. The catastrophe at the Bear Garden, and the fall of the house at the puppet-play in 1599,³ and similar casualties, were regarded as instances of God's vengeance on sinners. We have seen how ministers roused the people's fears on this score; but such warnings were not confined to the pulpit. The Recorder of London, Fleetwood, cited the Paris Garden disaster as proof of God's wrath.⁴ The great earthquake of the time was also thought to be a like manifestation of divine displeasure. Arthur Golding,⁵ Philip Stubbes, and the author of the ballad,⁶

Comme from the plaie, comme from the playe;
the house will fall so people saye:
the earth quakes; lett vs hast(e) awaye,

¹ *Nugae Antiquae* 1597, I, 190-2.

² Book I, chap. xxx, p. 42, *Of Sundrie Spectacles and Shewes*.

³ *State Papers*, 1599, p. 306.

⁴ Collier, I, 252.

⁵ Collier's *S. R.*, II, 118.

⁶ Arber's *S. R.*, II, p. 167, b; April 8, 1580.

more or less plainly attributed that phenomenon to God's express purpose. This influence, then, must be considered as we trace the growth of the movement against the stage.

The belief that these accidents were punishments sent directly from God for disregard of divine laws, especially for breach of the Fourth Commandment, leads us at once to a second great cause which in this period did much to increase public hostility to the stage. Equal in importance to the moral dangers of the play-house appeared to the Puritan its open violation of the Sabbath day. The early feeling on this point received from the Fathers, and the intensity of the leaders' denunciation of Sunday plays, re-echoed from the people. Golding denounced their desecration of the Sabbath, "to the utter dishonor of God, impeachment of all godlynesse, and unnecessarie consuming of mennes substances"; and as Kent with the slur, "base foot-ball player," tripped up Oswald, he reflected the dislike of the Puritans and soberer magistrates for those who, especially on Sunday, used the public land for such games. The moral play, *The Three Ladies of London*, noted the prevalence of the nuisance,¹ and all Puritan writers and ministers complained of it. The Council was slow to try to rectify the evil, while the Queen herself vetoed a bill providing for a better observance of the day;² but in spite of all laxness on the part of the officials, public sentiment, even before Dr. Bownd's book appeared, continued to grow. At Cambridge, about the year 1585, a Mr. Smith preached against the games held on Sunday afternoons and evenings; and, when summoned before the vice-chancellor, offered to prove that the Christian Sabbath should be spent in works of piety and charity.³ His position, Neal continues, seemed so reasonable to all sober persons that after a few years Sabbath observance became the distinguishing mark of the Puritan.⁴ This being so, we see at once the prejudice that would grow against stage-plays, which, even after legisla-

¹ Dodsley, VI, 287; printed in 1584.

² Neal, I, 302.

³ Ibid., p. 302.

⁴ Ibid., p. 367.

tion had turned against them, continued to be given on the Sabbath.

IV A third great source of the increase of hostility during the closing years of the 16th century lay in the animosity aroused by the great ecclesiastical troubles of the time. The Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy, the anonymous pamphlet campaign which certain of the extreme Puritans began in 1588 against the grievous abuse by bishops of their temporal power, had really nothing to do with the drama, save in its scurrility, as Lord Bacon remarked, it handled religion "in the style of the stage."¹ But because these extremists hated the bishops, and because they hated the stage, they joined the two as brothers in sin, and, in their main attack on one, brought in incidentally the other. An instance of this is found in *Hay Any Worke for Cooper*.² Martin there tells the story of a minister who one day went up into his pulpit fully resolved "to do his businesse with great commendations." Unfortunately, Robin Hood with his May-game and morris dance passed by, and Good Gliberie, the parson, overcome, as he saw a small boy sneak out of the door, with fond recollections of the past, when, "for want of a better," he had once played the Vice in a play, exclaimed, "ha, ye faith boie, are they there, then ha w^t thee," as he rushed from the church. Again, in *Martin Junior's Epilogue* we see Martin's ideas on the stage, as well as his motives for introducing them into his quarrel.³ He was willing to excuse, he said, "the stage-players, poore seelie hunger-starued wretches," who, without an honest profession, lived by playing the fool an hour or two together for one poor penny. He knew them to be "marueilous fitte upholders of Lambeth palace, and the crowne of Canterbury," yet he commanded his fellows not to fear "these beastes, these pursuivants, these Mar Martins, these stage-players, these prelates, these popes, these deuils, and al they can do." The suggestion lurking here that Martin was

¹ *Resuscitatio*, p. 162-79. (Ed. 1657.)

² p. 20-1.

³ Last page.

retaliating for the abuse, which, we shall see, the actors heaped upon him, is confirmed in another tract,¹ where it is said that the "rimers and stage players (that is, plaine rogues)" had been called to the aid of the "Canturburie Caiphas, with the rest of his Anti-Christian beasts." That Martin knew something of theatrical affairs we see by his two references in the *Epitome to Gammer Gurton's Needle*.² Without venturing to assume from that that he himself liked the drama, we at least believe that the Martinists would never have mingled the dramatic question with the assault on Episcopal tyranny had not the actors, before the controversy had run a year, partly because they saw in the Puritans a natural enemy and felt a desire to side with the attacked, partly also for pure love of lampooning, held up Martin for bitter ridicule on the stage. This certainly made it seem that an offensive and defensive alliance had been signed between the head of Canterbury and the London players. At any rate, the players were henceforth joined by Martin with his greater foes. A vast majority, of course, of the sober, moderate Puritans did not sympathize at heart with Martin in his scurrilous onslaught; many, even, did not object to seeing him lashed in return on the public stage. But others, naturally, were angered by the ridicule heaped by the players upon Martin, for we have seen in Nashe's treatment of Stubbes that they were not careful in the use of their satire.³ In consequence, such persons became more bitter toward plays than they had ever been, and new recruits were added to the ranks of the opposition.

A fourth great reason for the growth of Puritan sentiment was the disinclination of the actors to obey the restrictive measures touching their profession. As an instance of their arrogance the interesting case may be recalled, when in 1586 Lord Worcester's men broke faith with officials. "Mr. Mayor did geve the aforesaid players an angell towards there dynner, and wild them not to playe at this

¹ *The Reproofe of Martin Junior by his elder Brother.*

² p. 26, 55.

³ See chapter 5, p. 84.

p'sent." Nevertheless, the record continues, "The forsaid playors mett Mr. Mayor in the strete, neer Mr. Newcomb's housse, after the angell was geven a bowte a ij howres, who then craved lycence to playe ageyne," and being refused, "sed they wold playe, wheyther he wold or not." This they did; but later in the day, presumably near supper time, they returned to the mayor and apologized for the insult offered him. This occurrence at merry Leicester shows how public sentiment had been growing, and why it continued to grow.¹

Such unconcern for the public welfare was habitual with the players. The danger from plays in times of pestilence was universally recognized; yet in 1580 the complaint was heard that in Surrey the players had paid no attention to the temporary closure of the theaters because of the plague.² And in 1591 the Privy Council complained³ of a similar disregard of the laws forbidding performances on Sundays and Thursdays. A still more noteworthy instance of such contumacy was reported in 1589 by Lord Mayor John Hart to Lord Burleigh. In accordance with instructions received from the Privy Council he had ordered the play-houses closed till further notice. The Lord Admiral's players obeyed; but others, in spite of the order, went to the Cross Keys and acted there, "to the greate offence of the better sorte, that knew they were prohibited by order from your Lordship."⁴ This scandal among the better sort constantly increased. In 1586 a spy in Walsingham's service reported to his master the daily abuse of plays, which so offended the godly and hindered divine service that all Papists rejoiced. Every day, he wrote, playbills were posted, and while the bells summoned to church, the people flocked to the theater; and every day actors flaunted their splendid attire in the faces of those left poor through their ill-gotten gains. These things, he realized, might seem

¹ *Shakespeare Soc. Pub.*, Old Series, IV, 145-6.

² Privy Council, *Acts*, 1580, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, 1591, p. 324-5.

⁴ *English Drama and Stage*, p. 35.

"fitter for the pulpit than a souldiers pen," but the players' refractoriness caused even a soldier to express his sorrow.¹

Such were the agencies leading to a rapid and wide increase of hostility. Perhaps in conclusion the suggestion offered by Ordish may be significant.² In the edition of the *Survey of London* published in 1603, Stow omitted the mention of London theaters which had appeared in the edition of 1598, a change due, perhaps, to the increasing disapproval of the drama. Be that as it may, other facts presented in this chapter, taken in conjunction with the whole history of the dispute, are, we feel, sufficient indication that the English abhorrence of the theater was not confined to a few reformers or to churchmen, but that it was felt by all classes of society, and admitted absolutely by those who inclined at all to Puritanism. This fact must be borne in mind. For against the great popularity of the London theaters, and against the favor of the Court, only a thoroughly grounded and widely supported opposition could eventually have triumphed.

¹ Halliwell, *Illustrations*, Appendix.

² p. 45.

CHAPTER 10.

LEGISLATION ON THE STAGE; 1576-1603.

A reflection of this widely spreading sentiment is to be expected in English legislation. It should be remembered, however, that the statutes of the realm dealt but little with matters connected with the stage. It was chiefly in the Common Council of London, a body vitally concerned in the question, and in the Privy Council, that legislation in support of the Puritan opposition was framed. London's safety, as we have seen, early forced her to take prohibitory measures that culminated in the expulsion of the players from the city.¹ After that apparent victory, the magistrates would not see the flag of defiance blown in their faces from the Liberties without some vigorous protest on their part; and, supported by Puritan pamphlets, sermons and other expressions of opinion, they continued the struggle with hardly any interruption. But the change of location brought a new factor into the legislative side of the quarrel. The Liberties fell not within the city's jurisdiction, but under the control of the Privy Council; and therefore in all subsequent events the rivalry and friction between that body and the London Corporation was potent. In spite of the ensuing medley of orders and counter orders, petitions and complaints, lapses and renewals of laws and proclamations, beneath it all the rising Puritan opposition is visible.

The Privy Council had long kept a watch over the stage, as over all other things which could incite the people against either the church or the state; and Elizabeth, with her Tudor belief in the sovereign's royal power, was not one to ease the bridle. In 1575, and again in 1579, we have seen the Privy Council reach out to check and control the objectionable performances at Cambridge.² And when, in the bitterness of the Martin Mar-Prelate controversy, the players

¹ Chapter 2, (d).

² For these references see chapter 2 d, and chapter 7, p. 93-4.

ventured to enter the forbidden precincts of religious discussion, the Council with increased vigilance enforced the new provisions for a stricter censorship of the theater.¹ In 1601, for example, the Council called the attention of the Middlesex magistrates to the ridicule which the actors had been heaping on their administration, and ordered them to be more careful in their supervision.² At the same time, the government showed firm determination to enforce throughout the country the laws against wandering actors, as the careful examination into the offense of Sir Walter Waller and his men at Brasted will indicate.³ The Council also recognised the danger of the plague, and took frequent steps, in advice and orders to London and outlying towns, towards checking its ravages.⁴ Furthermore, they realized the disorder that plays caused the city, though, not being directly responsible for these civic inconveniences, they felt this less than did the Corporation. They often took steps to investigate affrays like that at Blackfriars in 1582;⁵ and fearing just such disturbances ten years later, they again forbade plays.⁶ In 1591, likewise, when they thought that their previous orders against playing on Sundays and Thursdays had been disregarded, they were not slow to complain.⁷ These are single illustrations of the disposition prevailing in Elizabeth's Council to regulate certain features of stage-exhibitions; and, except in the matter of Sunday plays, they were but carrying out a long-established policy of the Tudor family.

We must remember that at heart the Queen and many of her Council were lovers of the drama, and that such measures as they passed were necessary restrictions to meet imperative needs. Throughout, they favored the actors. In 1575 they gave the players at least moral support in referring to the Lord Mayor their petition for permission to play

¹ Privy Council, *Acts*, 1589, p. 215; *Shakespeare Soc. Pub.* III, 1-7.

² *Outlines*, I, 342.

³ *State Papers*, 1583, p. 109, 127-8.

⁴ *Remembrancia*, p. 330. *Outlines*, I, 320-1.

⁵ *State Papers*, 1582, p. 58.

⁶ *Outlines*, I, 329.

⁷ Privy Council, *Acts*, 1591, p. 324-5.

in the city. Again in 1581 and 1582 the Council urged and even ordered the city to permit players within its limits.¹ Thus right through the struggle, though at times the Council was forced by circumstances or continued importunity to comply with the city's wishes, their spirit was one of tolerance, if not always one of favor.

Such was the body whose coöperation the London Corporation was forced to seek in all subsequent dealings with actors. After a period of greater civic prerogatives it may be assumed that the city felt this curtailment of its former authority, and at times may have been led by a spirit of rivalry and contumacy in its dealings with the court. But that on the whole its actions were determined by the industrial and moral welfare of the city must be conceded.

The Lord Mayor had two great civic dangers to fear from public gatherings of all descriptions—the spread of the plague, and the disorders arising from overcrowded streets. In 1582, the Lord Mayor only with reluctance gave permit to one of the Earl of Warwick's servants for a street procession as a prelude to their coming fencing match.² And in 1583, his successor, mindful of a statute against "men of that facultie," forbade such a procession and the match as well, through dread of infection, disorder and a repetition of the Paris Garden disaster. On account of such dangers, apart from any moral grounds, London had early opposed the stage. But since London was one of the chief strongholds of the Puritan movement, its actions were largely influenced by genuine religious and moral feelings. }
Hampered by the Council's attitude, and opposed by the great popularity of the stage, they utilized, naturally, all possible means to their end. Even the licenser of books was brought in to ban Lodge's defense of his profession, in the hope that thus the overthrow of stage-plays would be simplified. Yet their moral end was never wholly obscured. In 1580 the Lord Mayor wrote to the Lord Chancellor

¹ Privy Council, *Acts*, 1582, p. 404; *Remembrancia*, 351; Ordish, 59.

² *Outlines*, I, 348.

noting the disorder at the exhibition of the previous Sunday, and informing him that players were a very "superfluous" sort of men, sowers of disorder; and theaters, a great hindrance to the preaching of God's word, and a source of corruption to youth.¹ Here, just as in the earlier petitions while plays still infested the city, we see civic and religious Puritanism so closely united that distinction is impossible.

London, as we have said, had no direct legislative authority over the Liberties, and, in reply to her complaints, the Council only urged her the more to yield. The Corporation, notwithstanding, never ceased to beseech the Council, in 1581 with the old plague argument,² to aid them in fighting the common danger. At that time the only response was the adverse, though indirect, action when the Lord Mayor, in respect for her Majesty's pleasure, was requested to favor the Queen's Company, newly organized by Walsingham himself. But shortly after, the Council was led to begin a different policy. In 1584, at the city's earnest request, it at last signed the order for the demolition of both the Theater and the Curtain.³ The firm stand taken by the Corporation, supported probably by more than one popular ballad like that which, after reciting just those ills constantly urged by the authorities against the play-houses, concluded,⁴

And who can blame the Magistrate,
If he essay to quell this curse;

and ably upheld by the four great Puritan attacks which had appeared in 1584, had at last forced the Council to this step. Apparently a second crisis, taking rank with the victory of 1575 and 1576, had been reached.

But either the Council's authority or zeal was weak. Both the condemned places still flourished, with only temporary closures now and then on account of the plague. Yet, judging from the Council's letter to the Lord Mayor

¹ *Remembrancia*, p. 350.

² Ordish, p. 60-1.

³ *Outlines*, I, 348-9 reprints the order.

⁴ Collier, *S. R.*, II, 125.

in 1586, it apparently thought that it had fulfilled its duty in trying to restrain and regulate, not to abolish, the exhibitions in the Liberties.¹ Signs, however, of a growth of moral feeling are indicated in the suppression of plays at Saint Paul's on account of the obscene words given the children in their parts.² And at last, the three great plague years, 1586, 1592, and 1593;³ the fear of public disturbances, which in 1592 forced the Council to shut the theaters from Midsummer to Michaelmas, and to watch closely the apprentices;⁴ the representations of the Lord Mayor that the houses had become the meeting places of disorderly persons where they planned their "lewd and ungodly practizes";⁵ the petition of the inhabitants of Blackfriars in 1596 against Burbage's proposed theater there;⁶ and the complaint of the same time against the Bear-Garden,⁷ again forced the Council to extremities. In 1597, in view both of the "lewd matter" contained in plays, as well as of the disorders arising in the theaters, another order was issued for the demolition of the Theater and the Curtain, and all other buildings used solely for plays. It forbade, also, all plays whatsoever till the coming Allhallowtide.⁸ Again London seemed to have won its victory. Again the authority of the law availed but little. The Curtain rode safely over the storm, and the Theater, dismantled by its owner only because his lease with Alleyn could not be confirmed, was removed to the Bankside, to be reopened in 1599 as the Globe. Moreover, in the face of renewed opposition, Blackfriars was built, the Fortune in Golden Lane was planned, and the Rose continued as of old.⁹ Only the great popularity of the drama gave the players the boldness so to neglect the Council's orders, and to thwart the purpose of this widely supported Puritan legislation.

¹ Fleay, p. 56.

² See Ward, I, 467.

³ Fleay lists the plague years, p. 162.

⁴ Privy Council, *Acts*, 1592, p. 550. ⁵ *Remembrancia*, p. 354.

⁶ *State Papers*, 1596, p. 310.

⁷ Harrison, *Description*, II, xxii.

⁸ *Outlines*, I, 330.

⁹ Fleay, p. 158.

In spite of the failure of its measures, the Council undoubtedly made sincere efforts. With a disposition to profit by failure without yielding to it, the Council, in response to many complaints received against the newly-planned houses, especially the Fortune, passed the order "for the restraunte of the imoderate use and Companye of Playehowyses and Players."¹ The multitude and misgovernment of the play-houses, the order affirmed, caused so much social disorder that some restriction was necessary. Yet since "the use and exercise of such playes, not beinge evill in ytself, may with a good order and moderacion be suffered in a well-governed state," and since "her Majestie," was "pleased at somtymes to take delight and recreation in the sight and hearinge of them," the Council sought to restrict, but not to abolish, the pastime. This change in the Council's attitude is not a mark of insincerity. Undoubtedly, the Court's love of the drama influenced it; but it had also seen in the past the fruitlessness of over-legislation, and had learned that effective restraint was better than ineffective prohibition. Consequently an order was passed, "to the ende, therefore, that both the greate abuses of the playes and playinge-houses may be redressed, and yet the afore-saide use and moderation of them retayned." With this purpose, they ordered first that two, and only two, play-houses should be allowed; but permitted Alleyn to proceed with the Fortune on the supposition that it was to take the place of the Curtain. Secondly, owing to the excessive use of plays in the past and the resulting damage to business and labor, it provided that these two houses should be opened only twice a week, but neither on Sunday nor during plague time. And thirdly, they reminded their petitioners that their orders would be unavailing without the coöperation of the justices of Middlesex and Surrey, and called upon the Lord Mayor and the authorities in the Liberties to attend to the fulfillment of the order.

Yet even this order, the last made by Elizabeth's Council

¹ *Outlines*, I, 281-2.

touching the matter, was not carried out. The Curtain not only refused to yield place to the Fortune, as had been expected, but rashly attacked in her plays those magistrates who had schemed for her ruin.¹ When the attention of the Privy Council was called to this, in December 31, 1601, a letter was sent to the Lord Mayor acknowledging the receipt of the new complaint, and expressing surprise that its last order had not been carried into execution.² For the neglect the Council blamed chiefly the justices of Middlesex and Surrey, implying, however, that London, too, was not exempt from blame. Fleay sees in this evidence that London's ruling motive was not Puritan, but a mere obstinate determination to assert its own privileges, opposing or countenancing, according as the Council's attitude was favorable or adverse, the theaters.³ This was not the case in 1584; and, considering the great difficulties in the way of the city, it seems fairer to lay the blame either on the inertia of the administration for that one year, or, as Simpson does, on the popularity in London of the Earl of Essex, whose part the players took.⁴ To be sure, the English edition of John Boden's *Commonwealth* concludes its censure of plays with the words, "There is no hope to see playes forbidden by the magistrats, for commonly they are the first at them."⁵ But when we consider the great popular demand for stage-plays, and the favor showed them in the Council—for again in 1604 London was requested to allow players after a temporary closure to resume at the three theaters, the Curtain having regained firm foothold⁶—we can account for the fact that in 1602 there were four public theaters open, besides some half dozen places where performances were regularly given, without impugning the sincerity of the magistrates' moral solicitude.

¹ *Outlines*, I, 342.

² *Ibid.*, 283.

³ Fleay, p. 161.

⁴ *Shakespeare Soc. Trans.* 1874, p. 386.

⁵ Book VI, p. 645-6.

⁶ *Outlines*, I, 284.

CHAPTER 11.

SUMMARY; 1576-1603.

With the year 1603 and the close of the Queen's reign, we terminate the second period in the growth of the Puritan opposition. Earlier than this, to be sure, in 1584, events seemed to be leading to a climax like that of 1576. By that year the spirit of opposition on the literary side had been expressed by the greatest of its early exponents, Northbrooke, Gosson and Stubbes; only the voice of Oxford's academic disputation was lacking to complete its full development. Then, also, when the long sought for order was obtained from the Council for the suppression of the Theater and the Curtain, London seemed about to win a victory greater even than that of 1576. But the victory was only apparent; for, backed by great popular favor, the theaters remained unharmed. We therefore do not call this the close of the second great period, but trace further the unmistakable growth of public feeling. The work of the great pamphleteers was carried on after 1584 by the lesser writers whom we have mentioned, and by new editions of the early treatises, while the writings of divines after that date scattered the seeds already sown. That recognition of the social and moral dangers of the theater was gradually extending, is confirmed by the evidence found in all sources, even in the ranks of the dramatists themselves. We must not, however, fall into the error of supposing that the theater had not still its patrons. If some actors spoke against it, of course the majority favored the outspoken vindications of Lodge and Nashe. It was still the popular diversion of the metropolis. Nevertheless the opposition, aided by force of circumstances, became strong enough to win at the end of the century another order of suppression from the Council; and though this, too, remained inoperative, the restrictive measure substituted for it served as a

check on the license of the players during the last two years of the Queen's reign. Thus both the Council and the Corporation were allied in their effort to control the stage.

All this is clear proof of a growing sentiment against stage-plays. The Council would never have taken such action unless forced by necessity, and they, as we have seen, were less exposed to the danger, and therefore slower in recognizing it, than were hundreds of sober steady citizens. Hence behind these actions of the Council we may infer a more than proportionate increase in the opposition of the middle classes. We can hardly expect to find this indicated in a marked falling off in the attendance at theaters. There are always enough people in a city to crowd such exhibitions, especially if they are rendered infrequent, as they were in London, by constant closures. From the very words of the assailants themselves, it is seen that the play-houses retained great popularity, drawing people from honest work and worship. The growth of the opposition can only be realized by careful research. The rapid increase in the momentum of the early quarrel, the more conservative, but equally forcible and significant, expressions of the men of all callings who spoke against it, reveal indubitably the widespread and growing opposition of the sober class against theatrical exhibitions of all sorts. In the rise of this opposition the culmination of events in the first years of the 17th century marks definitely a second high-water point, fully as conspicuous as the crisis of 1575, and this we take as the close of the second main period of the general Puritan movement against the English theater.

CHAPTER 12.

THE PERIOD OF CALM.

Thus had the controversy over stage-plays reached a natural crisis at the close of the Queen's reign, and in this, as in other matters, Puritanism awaited expectantly the first of the Stuarts. It was no mere flattery when Jonson wrote:¹

This is that James of which long since thou sung'st,
Should end our countries' most unnatural broils;

it was the earnest hope, rather, of men of both parties. The Puritans looked to him, the member of the Scotch Kirk, for at least tolerance, while the Episcopacy, thinking of his decided predilection for absolutism, did not despair of increased favor. Naturally, therefore, after the crisis came a lull in the stage controversy. And although the contemptuous treatment accorded Puritanism at the Hampton Court Conference soon dashed to the ground all hope of a more liberal policy toward the dissenters; and although the personal interest taken by the sovereign in the actors must have dissipated whatever confidence their enemies could have had in a man already proved a lover of the drama, yet the respite in the open, heated controversy was not immediately broken.

But notwithstanding the lull in the storm, there is good reason to believe that the quieter opposition grew steadily, and perhaps even the more rapidly, as a result of the actors' prosperity. The greater liberty allowed them brought increased license and disorder, and a more scathing ridicule of their opponents. It is fair, therefore, to assume that during the interim feeling against the drama advanced both in extent and in intensity.

Evidences of this growth of sentiment are reflected even in the acts of the King. Before the accession of the Stuarts, Parliamentary statutes passed in reference to the

¹ Jonson, *The Irish Masque*.

stage had been few and unimportant. In fact, the earliest notice paid the actors—the provisos exempting them from the restriction of the early sumptuary laws—were favorable.¹ Then when Parliament did begin to hamper the players, it was purely for political reasons. Henry VIII forbade any censure of the Roman religion on the stage,² a law promptly repealed by his successor.³ The first act really restricting the profession in itself was the law against wandering actors.⁴ But in the Stuart period prohibitions against the drama became more frequent. Though neither James nor Charles felt at heart the least desire to hamper the stage, nevertheless they were forced to make concessions to Puritan sentiment. Elizabeth, says Neal, had refused to sanction a law providing for a stricter observance of Sunday.⁵ Yet James had no sooner taken the throne than his royal proclamation forbade bear-baiting and stage-playing on the Sabbath, “for that we are informed that there hath been heretofore great neglect in this kingdom of keeping the Sabbath day.” Further concession was made in 1606, when the statute of the realm forbade the profane use in plays of the name of God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, or the Trinity, under penalty of a ten pound fine.⁶ Yet another indication of the widespread opposition to the stage is disclosed in the law of this period which recapitulated and explained the 39th of Elizabeth against vagabondism, since, as it said, the clause touching traveling actors had roused so much discussion and disagreement that a final interpretation was necessary.⁷ And though the law against Sunday playing passed in 1625 was to be operative but a year⁸—illustrative of the small part played by national statutes in the matter—we see in this as in other laws how the King was forced by public sentiment to take action against plays.

¹ 3 and 4 Edw. IV; 4 Hen. IV, c. 26; 1 Hen. VIII, c. 14; 7 Hen. VIII, c. 6; 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13.

² 34 and 35 Henry VIII, c. 1.

⁴ 14 Eliz., c. 5; 39 Eliz., c. 4; 1 Jac. I, c. 7.

⁵ Chapter 9, p. 114.

⁷ 1 Jac. I, c. 7.

³ 1 Edw. VI, c. 12.

⁶ 3 Jac. I, c. 7.

⁸ 1 Chas. I, c. 1.

First-hand illustrations of this hostile sentiment are found in various sources. Even at Leicester, once so fond of amusement, there was a marked cooling in the love for plays.¹ Likewise in the records of the borough of Plymouth is registered a payment made in 1604 to induce certain actors to leave town without playing, the first of many entries of a similar nature indicating that the old days of hospitable welcome to showmen had passed by.² In Chester an order of similar purport, aiming to check especially the disorders attending evening performances, was passed against "obscene and vnlawful plaies or tragedies."³

The grounds for such action lie on the surface. A play given in Leicester in 1605 caused such disorder that the benches and furniture of the town hall, where the play was given, were broken. This leads Kelly to suggest that perhaps the Puritans and the stage-party had come to blows.⁴ Indeed, it is not impossible that the Puritans, angered at some insult, had tried to eject the offending actors, to the injury of the town's property; for discretion in lampooning was not then the better part of playing. Hazlewood's account of *Early London Theaters*⁵ mentions a tract written about 1606 which censured players for their indirect attacks on members of the nobility. And in 1610 one of Edward Dymock's players received punishment for scurrilously imitating a preacher after service.⁶ If here are seen reasons for a growing opposition through the country, another equally strong, the scenes of riot and intoxication in the entertainment given the visiting King of Denmark in 1606, gave cause for similar feeling in London;⁷ and again the reminder may be given that none of the influences previously discussed lost their potency as the movement advanced.

The growth of these evils in country districts by the year

¹ Kelly, p. 121.

² *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, X, 4, 1885, p. 540.

³ *Ibid.*, Report 8, app. p. 364.

⁴ p. 120.

⁵ *Gentleman's Mag.*, 1816, vol. 86, pt. 1, p. 205.

⁶ *Hist. MSS. Com. App.*, 3rd ed. Rep., p. 57.

⁷ Yonge, *Diary*, p. 8.

1606 had become serious enough to call forth the notice of Judge Edward Coke at the London Assizes. Basing his charge on the order of James requiring all traveling actors to carry a royal permit, he said, "The abuse of Stage players, wherewith I find the Countrey much troubled, may easily be reformed: They hauing no Commission to play in any place without leaue: And therefore, if by your will-ingesse they be not entertained you may soone be rid of them,"¹ Evidently in some quarters there was hope that James' measures were going to prove salutary; but the seriousness of the situation forbade trust among Puritans in such reform.

During this intermission in the open quarrel, the activity of the ministers against the stage did not abate. There were two notable sermons of the time delivered by William Crashaw, the father of the poet. Preaching at Paul's Cross in 1607 against the Papists, he spoke of the kingdom of sin, which he termed a mystical Babylon. Of one of the "incurable sinnes" of that kingdom he said,² "The vngodly Playes and Enterludes so rife in this nation; what are they but a bastard of Babylon, a daughter of error and confusion, a hellish deuice, (the diuils owne recreation to mock at holy things) by him deliuered to the Heathen, from them to the Papists, and from them to vs." From responsibility in this evil the Christian Church, he felt, had cleared itself by its early and unceasing denunciations. Yet in spite of all the many words against it in his own day, that child of Babylon, the theater, would not be healed. Instead, it grew worse and worse, "for now they [plays] bring religion and holy things vpon the stage: no maruel though the worthiest and mightiest men escape not, when God himselfe is so abused." Besides such profanity and blasphemy in plays, the preacher objected also to "their continuall prophaning of the Sabbath, which generally in the countrie is their play day," when oftentimes divine worship was "hindred, or cut shorter to make roome and giue time for the diuels seruice."

¹ *Charge*, Fol. H. 2.

² *Sermon*, p. 170-2.

Two years later, on Lord Warre's departure for Virginia, Crashaw preached another sermon in which, with full apologies for introducing so vile a subject in his lordship's presence, he attacked the players for their ridicule of everything great or holy. It seems that the players had been abusing the plantation, in anger, as Crashaw explained, because none of their number had been allowed to sail thither to the relief of over-competition at home.¹ The insults to Virginia, however, so strangely introduced into this occasional discourse, were Crashaw's least concern. From his earlier sermon we see how sincere he was as he called upon the players to repent lest they be destroyed.

So popular were these discourses that oftentimes they were printed. Among others, certain sermons delivered by the Puritan divine, Robert Bolton, at Oxford and at Paul's Cross, were published in 1611 under the title *A Discourse of True Happiness*. Here the author considered the evil springing from the profanity and obscenity of plays. "How can any man," he exclaimed, "that euer felt in his heart, either true loue, or feare of so dreadfull a Maiesty, as the Lord of heauen and earth, endure to be present, especially with delight and contentment at Oathes, Blasphemies, Obscenities, and the abusing sometimes of the most precious things in the Booke of God."² In a later collection of addresses,³ Bolton again numbered plays among sinful sports, illustrating perfectly the common sentiments of Puritan divines.

In the same spirit the *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, which gave its author the name "Decalogue Dod," spoke of stage-plays under two of the commandments. In his talk on purity Dod asserted that the theater was the house of lust and filthiness; and on the subject of theft, likewise, players were mentioned as men, who, in return for their support, rendered services harmful both to soul and body, while they themselves became "the most prophane

¹ *Works*, ed. Grossart, II, xliii-iv.

² p. 73-4.

³ *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God*, p. 169.

and lewd of men." In the same year appeared *A Probe Theologicall upon the Commandments*, by Osmond Lake. In relation to the Seventh Commandment Lake said¹ that mortal infection was received from the corrupt words and the evil examples of plays. He then expounded more fully his meaning. The preaching, not the playing, of God's word had been ordained by God. He admitted, nevertheless, that those who felt that they got as much good from a play as from a sermon spoke perhaps the truth. Such persons received hurt from both—from plays "by learning the skill of sinne," from sermons, by hearing, only to neglect, "the doctrine of righteousness." Furthermore, he pointed out that plays were not frequented for the acquisition of good, but for the sake of carnal delight; and that it would be impossible for an amusement so habitually profane to yield good. Lastly, he refuted the argument that since some lawful things are abused, therefore the theater, though abused, should not be condemned. The distinction lost in this reasoning between things necessary and unnecessary seemed obvious. Then, having proved that plays were unnecessary, he closed with this clear statement of his feeling toward plays—that since they were unnecessary, and since "none, but of rare grace and gift can be present at, or actors in them, without going away spotted," therefore "they are . . . to be eschewed."

These are probably but a few of the instances in which divines attacked the stage both in the pulpit and in writing; and their influence in spreading and deepening the hostility at this time can hardly be estimated. Their warnings, together with the increased license and freedom of actors on the stage, we feel did more than a continuance of the sharp pamphlet warfare of previous years would have done to arouse public sentiment. Consequently, the interim was a period of strengthening and deepening of the hostility to dramatic art.

¹ p. 267-72. Date, 1612.

CHAPTER 13.

RENEWAL OF THE LITERARY CONTEST.

It was only a temporary truce that the Puritan pamphleteers had signed, and although their cause prospered well in their silence, the armistice was soon broken. The first known work, however, of what we call the period of renewed hostility was not controversial. It was the anonymous six-act comedy of 1610, *Histrion-Mastix: or, the Player Whipt*, which both for its character and for its name, made famous by a later writer, is noteworthy. The comedy was first written by Peele, and later retouched by Marston; and being in subject an attack on the common players and a vindication of the boys' companies against the men's, it could not have been intended for the common stage.¹ As an expression of this professional rivalry, its argument was based entirely on non-moral grounds, which formed only a part of the Puritan cause; and one sees that *Histrion-Mastix* sprang from the general sentiment of previous years rather than from principles rigidly connected with the dispute.

The play is an allegory in the style of the old moralities, showing how both noblemen and citizens, in spite of the warnings of Chrisoganus, the Jonsonian critic, forsake the arts and give themselves up to the luxury of an era of peace and plenty. One of the diversions to which the misguided men yield is patronage of Sir Oliver Owlet's company of actors. "This going to a play is now all in the fashion," they say:² and although some have misgivings that, compared with the solid mental food offered by Chrisoganus, it is "a deale of prating to so little purpose," the fashion carries the day, and Sir Owlet's men give their performance. Such "lame stuff" it proves to be that soon they are stopped.³ The satire on the play and the players concerns

¹ *School of Shakspeare*, Simpson's Introduction.

² Act I, l. 174.

³ Act II, l. 280.

the warfare of the theaters rather than our struggle; but the strolling band is attacked also on strictly Puritan grounds. The actors, becoming "insolent with glib prosperity," decline to play for less than ten pounds, and even during the ravages of civil war refuse to discontinue.¹ They are forced, however, to leave their useless life, and, as recruits impressed for military service, they next appear in the muster stripped of their gaudy costumes, and soundly berated by the drill sergeant for marching like drowned rats, they who had once so proudly played the part of Tamburlaine. As the play proceeds their fortunes still decline. War brings famine to the land, the players' board bills are unpaid, and their clothing is sacrificed to meet the demands of an insistent landlady. Still less easily pacified is the constable who immediately seizes their persons for arrears in taxes. Though they promise him to leave their acting, and, with superhuman effort, return to their old trades—Gut to making fiddle strings, Belch to hair dressing, and Posthaste to ballading, nothing but transportation will satisfy. The ship stands ready, and, with unseamanlike disregard for the wind, the constable's order is, "no matter where it blows, away with them." Soon they are drifting to unknown lands, while Peace and Plenty return to England.

As a private play, *Histrion-Mastix* can not be said to have reopened the pamphlet warfare. Hence Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, which was published in 1612, was inspired by no special attack, but rather by the steadily growing opposition during the days when plays and theaters flourished under royal patronage. Nevertheless, it afforded the most elaborate defense then given of the actors' profession. The *Apology* is divided into three brief treatises, which set forth concerning actors "their Antiquity," "their ancient Dignity," and "the true use of their Quality"; and following this outline, rather than the approved arguments of earlier defenders, Heywood offered his vindication of the drama.

In the first treatise, Heywood showed the high antiquity

¹ Act III, l. 267.

of the stage, and argued that since neither Christ nor his Apostles, not even Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, forbade Christians to attend the Roman games, it was illogical to say that the absence of any favorable mention of plays in the Bible made them unlawful.¹ On the contrary, silence gave assent. In the second part ancient theaters and their various uses are described. Here Heywood, like all other defenders, regretted the sins of his comrades, wishing "that such as are condemned for their licentiousnesse, might by a generall consent bee quite excluded our society; for, as we are men that stand in the broad eye of the world, so should our manners, gestures, and behaviours, savour of such government and modesty, to deserve the good thoughts and reports of all men." Notwithstanding, he proudly asserted, "Many amongst us I know to be of substance, of government, of sober lives, and temperate carriages, house-keepers, and contributory to all duties enjoined them."² He begged, therefore, that the body as a whole should not be blamed for the faults of a few. In the third part, which most concerns us, he gave the advantages derivable from the stage. In the first place, it was one of the ornaments of the city of London; for no other nation had finer plays than England, a means both to entertain and to impress foreign dignitaries. It was the drama, moreover, that had given polish and refinement to the language. It had also been such a source of training, not only in the schools, but also to the people, that even the most illiterate could then "discourse of any notable thing" in the glorious course of England's history, and were familiar with its lessons of obedience and loyalty to kings. Such salutary teaching came not alone from historical plays.³ Though unwilling to defend "any lascivious shewes, scurrelous jeasts or scandalous invectives," Heywood believed that the drama in all its forms could teach nobility and bravery, and disclose the evils of pride, intemperance and lust. As proof, he cited the instance of the murderer who publicly confessed at the

¹ p. 24.² p. 43-4.³ p. 54-6.

play-house his crime; and, with unconscious humor and an unwitting thrust bred of long practice, narrated the episode of the band of Spaniards which, in its secret advance through London's streets, fled in fear as it heard the tumult of battle upon the stage. Consequently, Heywood was unwilling to sacrifice this wholesome art because some few derived evil from it, and because some actors and some plays failed to fulfill their true mission.

With the same arguments from the ideal that Lodge had used, Heywood looked upon plays as a source of good. If they had really instilled a love of virtue and an abhorrence of vice, his position would have been fair. It is certain, however, that the majority of plays did no such thing. Osmund Lake soberly confirmed the assertion of Gosson and all other pamphleteers that the evil scenes were greeted with shouts of delight, rather than with disgust; and we may assume that if the audiences had not wished vice to appear in plays it would never have been found. It is significant that Heywood himself was not wholly free from subjection to the low.¹ Thus the *Apology* is based only on an ideal of triumphant purity; but this was not Elizabethan England.

In connection with the *Apology*, the commendatory poems written by Heywood's theatrical friends throw an interesting side-light on the quarrel. Some merely restate the author's argument. Hopton, for example, said that plays kept gallants from evil occupations. But in others, the typical actors' conception of the Puritan is revealed. Richard Perkins confessed that although never given to dissipation he was not Puritanical, explaining himself thus:

Still when I come to playes, I love to sit
That all may see me in a publike place,
Even in the stages front, and not to git
Into a nooke, and hood-winke there my face.
This is the difference: such would have men deeme
Them what they are not; I am what I seeme.

¹ In the catch at the end of Act IV of the *Rape of Lucrece*, and in the comedy, *A Maidenhead Well Lost*, Heywood clearly pandered to vulgar taste.

Another, also, spoke of Puritanical duplicity. However valueless these verses may be, they at least betray the opinions rife among the players in regard to their opponents.

Heywood was directly answered by an anonymous *Refutation*. But before turning to this and the other Puritan tracts that shortly followed,¹ it may be best to consider another defense, written in 1616 by Nathaniel Field, son of John Field, the redoubtable opponent of the stage. This interesting character stood up bravely for his fellows in answer to Dr. Sutton's diatribe against the players of the Globe Theater. In his *Remonstrance*,² Field protested that he had always tried to live as a true Christian should, and that he in no wise deserved Sutton's bitter and uncharitable condemnation. His was a personal reply, therefore, to a personal attack, since Sutton had not spared, Field averred, "particularly to point att me and some other of my quallity, and directly to our faces in the publique assembly to pronounce us dampned," as though intending "to send us alive to hell in the sight of many wittnesses." Field reminded his adversary that this was not Christ's way of reproving sinners, who suffered for all men, the player not excluded. He assured Sutton that if he had spoken more charitably and sensibly against the vices of the stage he would have agreed with him. Instead, Sutton had stooped to the absurdest arguments to support his condemnation. Forgetful, as Field pointed out, that "there was a tyme there was noe smith in Israel" he had argued that all players were doomed because none were mentioned in the Bible. Even because Cæsar, who, having lower amusements to follow, banished the stage; or because, according to legend, a certain woman became possessed with a devil at the theater, he had seen fit to condemn them. Such arguments, Field declared, would never move him to be ashamed of a calling sanctioned by his "Cæsar" and by his Christian state, and repined at

¹ In 1613 George Wither published his *Abuses stript and whipt*, which attacked the stage. See pp. 63, 248, 289-91.

² Reprinted in Halliwell's *Illustrations*, p. 115-7. See also *State Papers*, 1616, p. 419.

only by those whose "curiosity" outweighed their "charity." This sturdy reply, in which the ministerial spirit of the old Fields is not wholly extinct, marks the growth in intensity of the controversy. In his bitter denunciation, Sutton had pointed directly to Field and certain others as he condemned the craft, and in this extreme position he undoubtedly did not stand alone.

Field's, however, was a purely occasional defense, interesting on that very account, but probably having no reference to the formidable attack on the stage that had appeared in the preceding year. We return now to this direct reply which Heywood's *Apology for Actors* called forth, and to the renewal of the pamphlet warfare in its later years. In 1615, three years after the *Apology* was issued, there appeared *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* by J. G., presumably John Green, which, in confuting and opposing "all the chiefe Groundes and Arguments alleaged in defence of Playes," was arranged like its predecessor in three treatises. These set forth respectively concerning actors their "Heathenish and Diabolicall institution," "their ancient and moderne indignitie," and "the wonderfull abuse of their impious qualitie." We see at once the nature of this "long and laboured puritanical answer to Heywood."¹

It may be well to call attention at once to a point illustrative of the close connection between the Puritan attacks. Early in our investigation we noticed how without acknowledgment Northbrooke incorporated in his work the words of a forerunner; we noticed also how Stubbes described the subject-matter of plays in almost Gosson's exact words, as if the passage were the common property of all Puritans; and now we see how closely the author of the *Refutation* was dependent on Stubbes. Against plays he exclaimed, "Do they not induce Whoredome and uncleannesse? nay; are they not rather plaine deuouerers of Maidenly Virginity and Chastity? For prooffe where of but marke the madding and running to Theaters and Curtaines, daily and hourelly,

¹ So Lowndes characterizes it.

night and day, time and tyde, to see Playes and Enterludes."¹ This denunciation strikingly resembles a passage in the *Anatomie of Abuses* reading, "For prooffe whereof, but marke the flocking and running to Theaters & curtens, daylie and hourelly, night and daye, tyme and tyde, to see Playes and Enterludes."² Another similar, though less striking, resemblance between the two is found in the passage of the *Refutation* where plays are classed as divine or profane, and condemned, if of the former class as sacrilegious, "for in noe wise is it lawfull to mixe Scurrility with Divinity," and if of the latter, as a means "to the dishonour of God, and nourishing of vice."³ The correspondence of this with a passage already quoted from Stubbes is apparent. A third resemblance is found in their ideas on acting. Stubbes had asked in regard to that "cursed kind of life" who could be called a wise man who played the part of a devil, who a just man who played the part of a hypocrite, or who a "straight deling man" who played a "Cosoners trick." Now hear his follower:⁴

Therefore let all Players and founders of Playes, as they tender the saluation of their owne soules, and others, leaue off that cursed kind of life, and betake themselues to such honest exercises and godly misteries, as God hath commanded in his word to get their liuing withall. For who will call him a wise man that playeth the foole and the vice? Who can call him a good Christian that playeth the part of a Diuell the sworne enemy of Christ? Who can call him a iust man that playeth the dissembling hypocrite? Who can call him a straight dealing man, that playeth a cosoners tricke: and so of all the rest.

These passages reveal the intimate relation between the different Puritan attacks. In its argument there is nothing especially new in the *Refutation*; but in its spirit evidences both of changed feelings and changed conditions are noticeable. The way had been well prepared for the author. Unlike Northbrooke, he had no fear to make public his work. Lest some credulous persons might be seduced by the falsehoods of the *Apology for Actors* he deemed an answer desirable, and though but a "novice" he ventured to under-

¹ p. 61.² p. 144.³ p. 54.⁴ p. 62 et seq.

take the work, confident that it did not require "a better Ingene" than his own "to batter all the Bulwarks and Fortresses therein [in the *Apology*] rayseed to oppugne the truth, euer hitherto deliuered and preached against these Stagerites, and prophane Spectacles presented in the Theaters."¹ So far was the author from anticipating opposition that he sought no patron, confident that "all good men, rightly religiously and sincerely desposed, . . . will with emulation striue, and if need be, contende who shall first patronize my worke." To be sure, Heywood and his abettors might ridicule him as an "unlearned Punie," and his book as a "Fooles Bolt." Yet he rested assured that even with his slight ability and with no definite patron, he could safely attack the *Apology for Actors*. He was counting positively, and not without reason, on a favorable audience; for the opposition to the theater was then standing on firm ground.

The uncompromising spirit of the *Refutation* also marks it as a production not of the early period. Of all the unlawful and artificial pleasures devised by Satan, stage-plays, the author felt, were "the most impious and pernicious."² He called attention to the low status of actors in the ancient world, and to the implied denunciation and prohibition of plays in the Scriptures.³ Like a follower of Rainoldes, he attacked bitterly the university performances, and the "spend-all" gentlemen who attended them.⁴ Then he described the character and demoralizing influence of plays, and urged that even though theoretically there might be good in them, even then they should not be tolerated, "for good when it is the occasion of euill, ceaseth any longer to bee good, but is turned into sinne."⁵ To the popular argument from the moral training of plays he replied as Northbrooke had done, "And truely so there may; For if you will learne to doe and euill skilfully, cunningly, covertly, or artfully, you need go no other where then to the Theater."⁶

¹ p. 2.

² p. 4.

³ p. 9, 52.

⁴ p. 17.

⁵ p. 39 et seq.

⁶ p. 57-62.

His conclusion, therefore, was that plays were wholly evil, and actors, an idle, unprofitable and vicious class. In this exhaustive argument the author embraced all that had gone before him—antiquity, the Fathers, Northbrooke, Stubbes and Rainoldes, as he advanced to a more uncompromising position than that of his English predecessors. In both respects he stands as the forerunner of the last and most bitter assailant of the stage. Yet in attacking unsparingly the actor's profession he did not forget himself so far as to insult his opponent's personal character, nor did he lose, as his successor did, all sense of fairness in the excitement of the controversy. His work, therefore, belongs to the middle period of the dispute.

These signs that the main strength of the Puritan argument had already been expressed, and that commotion was hardly liable to be excited by a new expression of hostility, are confirmed by several minor works of the time. In the year following the *Refutation, The Rich Cabnit Furnished with Variety of Descriptions* was issued by T. G.,¹ presumably Captain Gainsford of the old Surrey family. The *Cabnit* contains a character sketch of the actor, which, coming not from the genuine Puritan body but from the gentry and the royal army, not from a reformer but from a spectator, does much to indicate the growth of feeling against the stage. With the old defense of the stage:

I should be vertuous, sith to vice I act:
As makes both me, and others loath the fact,

he began—"Plaier was not taken in ill part at the first but counted both a glory and a comendation." Then his entertainment was used seldom and only in an honorable way, so that "Plaier was euer the life of dead poesie," and taught man to shun vice. But in stooping to please the vicious tastes of the age "with pleasing content and prophane iests" he had fallen under the ban of the law and was closely watched as a rogue. In so partly blaming the people for the actors' sins, the apparently unconcerned author approached

¹ Reprinted in *English Drama and Stage*.

the truth. With further allusion to their prodigality and indignity in the eyes of society, and to their sin in wearing feminine attire, the English Theophrastus then tripped on to other subjects with the final conceit, "Player is like a garment which the Tailor maketh at the direction of the owner; so they frame their action, at the disposing of the Poet. . . . They are reciprocall helpes to one another; for the one writes for money, and the other plaies for money, & the spectator payes his money." The controversy by this time had reached a point when a character writer, whose purpose was neither to reform nor to attack, in fact to do nothing seriously, could find the player a permissible subject for his attention.

The advanced state of the quarrel is again indicated in a short and concisely classified summary printed apparently at some private press, and now very rare.¹ It purported to be a "humble supplication" tendered to Parliament, begging it "to take once more into consideration this matter of Stage-playes, and by some few Words added to the former Statutes, to restreyne them for euer hereafter." It was entitled *A Shorte Treatise against Stage-Playes*, and was well summarized by the mottoes of the title page:² "It is a sport to a foole to doe mischief"; "He that loues pastime shall be a poore man"; and "Haue no fellowship with the vnfruitfull works of darknesse, but rather reprove them." It differed from most Puritan treatises in its brief categorical arrangement. The first three divisions display the pagan origin of plays, their consecration either to idolatry or to the fooleries of the Catholic Church, and their sinful subject-matter. In the fourth and last section the unlawfulness of stage-plays is proved, first, as a relic of Heathendom, as contradictory to Paul's command to the Philippians,³ and as a pollution rather than a rest to mind and body; secondly, because they wrongfully make sport either of God's dreadful judgments or the sins of men;

¹ Lowe, p. 319. Reprinted, *English Drama and Stage*.

² Taken from *Prov.*, 10, 23; 21, 17; *Ephes.*, 5, 11.

³ *Phil.*, 4, 8.

thirdly, because of the actors' vices; fourthly, because of the dangers to the beholders; fifthly, because of the disastrous fruits of the stage in the waste of time and money, in the profanation of the word of God, and in the moral corruption of men and women; sixthly, because stage-plays have been disowned in times past by heathens and Christians; and seventhly, because of the judgments of God upon the beholders of the iniquity. Under each of these several topics the argument is briefly explained and elaborated; even in the last section, with a restraint that should have commended itself to his successor, the author refrained from much display of authority, since it would be "a verie tedious and troublesome thing for so many reverend and so old aged Fathers to travell so farre" to bear witness for him. Would it be too venturesome, in the light of this tabulated arrangement, to rank the unknown author among the Puritan ministers to whom this orderly style of discourse had already commended itself? Even on still stronger grounds does it seem the work of a divine. It gives the best side of the Puritan attack—calm in tone, sensible in argument, intelligent and forcible in its use of the Scriptures; and therefore, though it reveals no intimate familiarity with the stage, it is creditable like Northbrooke's *Treatise* for its saneness and sincerity, and serves, if not as a spokesman of new ideas, at least as a concise summary of old.

In 1628 appeared Richard Rawledge's *A Monster lately found out, or The Scourging of Tipplers*, which named plays among other disgraces of London, and commended those "pious magistrates" and "religious senators" for their zeal in urging Elizabeth and her Council to suppress them. Had their successors followed that worthy example, he believed sin would not then have been so rampant in the city.¹ Intemperance was the main theme of this work; but so conspicuous was the evil of the stage that it was closely joined with all other forms of vice, and was so attacked by writers of this as of the earlier time.

¹ p. 2-3.

With these minor attacks the active literary campaign in the secular world before the appearance of the *magnum opus* of the Puritan cause was over. The sharpest part of the dispute, though not the most vehement, had come in the preceding century, and the Puritan aversion had been then fully expressed. Two of these later attacks we regard as particularly important. The *Refutation*, as a direct reply to the last great defense of the dramatic art, and as an indication of the steady advance of public opinion, and, in its comprehensiveness and detail, as a forerunner of Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*; and the *Shorte Treatise*, as a clear, concise and well tabulated compendium of the Puritan position, are deserving of an important place in this midway period of the controversy.

CHAPTER 14.

FEELING BEHIND THIS LATER LITERARY CAMPAIGN.

In the preceding chapter the rising animosity of the controversialists has been traced from the reappearance of the secular attacks to the year 1633. During these years, public feeling, from forces aside from its own momentum, increased with more than proportionate rapidity, so that in the first twenty years of the Stuart rule the appeal of the drama, once so universal, constantly narrowed, and the number of theaters and performers, in consequence, considerably diminished.¹ Under the new conditions, the same causes that had at first aroused hostility were still operative. In addition, the irritating license of the dramatists in their days of prosperity, and the disinclination of the Stuart kings to conciliate the people or to reassure them of an ultimate and satisfactory settlement, did much to hurry to an end the controversy.

To be sure, the Stuart sovereigns, like the Tudors, showed a disposition to watch the stage carefully. To facilitate this, James even deprived noblemen of their right of patronage, and took the companies under his own control.² Some instances of royal supervision may here be cited. In 1614, Sir John York, his wife and brothers, were fined and imprisoned for a play acted in favor of popery, in which a character representing James was carried off on the Devil's back to the alleged home of all Protestants.³ In one report of this affair, a marginal comment reads, "The greatest subject in England can have no common players, and to have them it is a riot. It is no trade, but they are Parliament rogues."⁴ Similar attention was given the Cambridge play, *Ignoramus*, which ridiculed the magistrates and the legal

¹ Collier, I, 432.

² I Jac. I, c. 7.

³ *State Papers*, 1614, p. 242; 1628, p. 333.

⁴ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, App. to 3' ed. Rep., p. 63.

profession.¹ Again, in 1625, the Council watched lest the players should offend the Dutch government;² and in 1631, to prevent the disorderly assembly of strangers in the Inner and Middle Temples, forbade there the customary Christmas plays.³ Lastly, in 1639, careful examination was made of *The Whore New Vamped*, where magistrates were satirized and the government libeled.⁴ The Court, in fact, never ceased to look vigilantly after the common players.

Notwithstanding these restrictive measures, the Stuart sovereigns were ardent lovers of the drama, and being destitute of the tact of the Tudors in dealing with the people, their acts angered the masses, and gave new impetus to the opposition against the stage. In the first place, the excess and immorality of James' court, and the lavish expenditure of much needed money on court masques—for example the riotous entertainment given the visiting King of Denmark, strengthened the Puritan hostility. No better expression of the sense of shame so aroused in the soberer classes can be found than in Lucy Hutchinson's *Memoirs* of her husband. There in describing the viciousness of English society, when "every great house . . . became a sty of uncleanness," she said, "To keep the people in their deplorable security, till vengeance overtook them, they were entertained with masks, stage plays, and sorts of ruder sports. Then began murder, incest, adultery, drunkenness, swearing, fornication, and all sort of ribaldry, to be no concealed but countenanced vices, because they held such conformity with the court example."⁵ This, as much as the increased rigor of the ecclesiastical authorities, spread the Puritan sentiment among the masses of the people.

Again, though James and Charles yielded enough to public opinion to forbid plays on the Sabbath day, and to check their profanity, both took measures more than counterbalancing the good. On May 24th, 1618, James issued his famous *Declaration of Lawful Sports*, forbidding rude and

¹ *State Papers*, 1615, p. 286.

² *Ibid.*, 1625, p. 481.

³ *Ibid.*, 1631, p. 215.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1639, p. 529-30.

⁵ p. III.

disorderly pastimes on Sundays and holy days—bear-baiting, interludes and the like, but sanctioning other sports for evening amusement on those days. Heylyn explains the proclamation in this way. The King's former declaration against Sunday plays had been interpreted so strictly by Puritan ministers and magistrates that all Sabbath games were being prohibited, so that the day was raised far above festival days, and people were persuaded that Protestantism meant a sacrifice of personal liberty.¹ Hence the *Book of Sports* was ordered read in all the churches. The effect was felt immediately in the stage controversy. Although plays were expressly excluded from "those lawful recreations and honest exercises," the Puritans looked on the act as only the first step toward the utter demolition of the day's sanctity. Consequently, the stage's opponents were roused by a danger which they felt imminent.² Nor was their fear unjustified. In 1622 James granted liberty for church-ales, dancing and other recreations in the North, as a means of drawing recusants to church;³ and in 1624 he vetoed the bill passed by Parliament for sanctifying the Sabbath. Charles, to be sure, authorized a measure against Sunday plays, but it was to be operative only a year. His general heedlessness of popular sentiment on this point culminated when he ratified, in 1633, his father's *Declaration of Lawful Sports*, with the result, as Whitelocke asserts, that many not really Puritans were driven into opposition.⁴ Under the Stuart rule, therefore, respect for the Fourth Commandment, which had long inspired hatred of plays, caused heightened tension.

On yet a third score the people were aroused by action of the court; and this time, Queen Henrietta was the offender. With her foreign tastes and her haughty contempt of English feeling, she in 1629 induced some French actresses to play at Blackfriars. The reception accorded

¹ *Aerius Redivivus: Hist. Presby.*, edit. 1670, lib. XI, p. 389-90.

² See Baker, *Chronicles*, p. 445, and Kelly, p. 120, for its reception. Also Yonge, *Diary*, p. 64.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁴ *Memorials*, I, 48.

them is well pictured in a contemporary letter, whose author rejoiced to "saye they were hissed, hooted, and pippen-pelted from the stage, so as I do not thinke they will soone be ready to trie the same againe."¹ In this he erred, it is true, for of their similar experiences at their third appearance Sir Henry Herbert bears witness; but the situation he probably did not misrepresent. Actresses never again ventured on the pre-Restoration stage. Yet since Henrietta, as defiantly as she dared, patronized a company of French actors, the outraged feelings of the people, though incensed not wholly on moral grounds, never forgot the new danger.

⑤ The attitude assumed by the King toward profanity in plays, though in a less degree than those three influences already mentioned, exasperated public opinion. The Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, in expunging oaths from plays, became so strict that in one instance the King, on the complaint of Endymion Porter, promptly censured him for his scrupulosity and allowed some of the expressions marked for expurgation.² This simple act could never have been known to many; but the King's general attitude toward stage morality was only too apparent, and here, as in state questions, the old-time Puritans were joined by many who had never before been numbered among them.

A short excursus may be in place on the attitude of Scotland toward the drama, which may have had some slight influence on England. Edinburgh had neither theater nor concert-hall until the 18th century, though in early days the sacred drama gained some foothold there.³ In 1574-5, approximately the date that plays were driven from London, the General Assembly asserted its right to license the performers, and prohibited plays on Sunday, and plays on canonical parts of Scripture on any day.⁴ The hostility gradually deepened. When James brought to Scotland a company of English actors, and licensed their exhibitions

¹ Collier, II, 23-4; 66.

² Fleay, p. 337.

³ Traill, III, 405; Ward, I, 131.

⁴ Calderwood, *Hist. of the Kirk in Scotland*, III, 345.

in Edinburgh, the ministers, sturdily standing by the Assembly's decrees, preached against "their unruliness and immodest behavior," and in their sessions forbade the people to resort to their plays under pain of church censure. James compelled them to yield, but the spirit was not broken. So in 1617, when the King took his actors with him to Scotland, one of them was led to conclude from their welcome, "that if Christ and his Angels at the last day should come down in their white garments, they [the Scotch] would run away and cry, 'The Children of the Chapel are come again to torment us! Let us flee from the abomination of these boys, and hide us in the mountains!'"¹

So it was not English Puritanism alone that the Stuart kings outraged in patronizing their amusements; and, as opposition grew in England against the stage, some encouragement may have been derived from the Presbyterians in the North. At any rate, urged on by the same old dangers, and by the exasperating attitude of the court, feeling against the stage grew rapidly in the years before 1633. Town councils were more hostile than ever. In Stratford-on-Avon in 1612, the magistrates, following an example set by Southampton and other towns,² forbade plays in the town hall, explaining that their sufferance was "against the example of other well-governed cities and boroughs."³ The London Corporation still was confronted with the same dangers. In 1614, owing to widespread poverty and vagabondism, the Lord Mayor inaugurated a reform, ridding the streets of idlers, shutting up the houses of ill fame, and placing restrictions on brewers and even bakers.⁴ The renewals of this measure in 1617 and 1621 indicate not only the permanence of the obstacles confronting the administration, but also the determination of the officials. Is it strange that in 1615 the Mayor and the aldermen were still opposing theaters? Or is it fair to imply, when Charles himself on account of the plague once

¹ Collier, I, 407.

² *Hist. MSS. Com.*, XI, 3, p. 28.

³ Lee, p. 217, n.

⁴ Traill, IV, 144-5.

forbade all fairs within fifty miles of London, that the Puritans used the infection merely as an argument?¹ In spite of all precautions, however, the dangers could not be averted. The burning of the Globe in 1613 reminded the people of former judgments of God on playgoers, and in 1616 the city apprentices, who had long claimed the right of demolishing houses of immorality on Shrove Tuesday, attacked and "spoyled" the Cockpit theater.² One now may doubt the moral purpose of the act; nevertheless, a contemporary ballad takes the other view, and praises them for their virtue.³ Whatever their intentions were, the riots of the 'prentices added their influence to the rest in making more apparent the dangers of the theaters, and in calling to mind the law which limited them to three.

In 1618, at any rate, an order was passed by the London Corporation, which, recalling the petition of 1596 and the Council's restrictive order of 1600, acknowledged the receipt of a new petition from Blackfriars against the many inconveniences arising from the theater there—the loss of trade, the injury to the shopkeepers' booths from the great crowds of pleasure seekers, the frequent quarrels among them, and the interruption to afternoon prayers in the near-by church, and ordered its suppression.⁴ Nothing could have come of this order. For in 1631 the people of Blackfriars again complained of the nuisance and the damage which the theater caused tradesmen, of the obstruction of traffic, and of the danger in case of fire from the crowds; basing the complaint on the fact that the house was situated, in direct violation of the long-standing ordinance, within the city's limits.⁵ Still nothing was done in the matter, and in 1633, when the Council debated the advisability of suppression, the only result was the attempt to mitigate the overcrowding of the narrow streets.⁶ These complaints are now so familiar that comment is unnecessary. They show that in

¹ Stow, *Chronicle*, p. 1045.

² Quoted by Collier, I, 402-4.

³ *State Papers*, 1631, p. 219-21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1026.

⁵ *Outlines*, I, 285.

⁶ Collier, II, 50.

spite of all restrictions as to the number and location of the play-houses, the evil had never been rectified. These conditions, together with the exasperating attitude of the royal family, from this time on caused sentiment to increase with surprising rapidity.

Under these adverse conditions, it is to be expected that the denunciations of ministers should have continued with ever increasing bitterness. The words of the author of the *Refutation* and of Prynne record the commonness of these sermons; and the extreme and uncharitable spirit of some of them is exemplified in the *Remonstrance* of Field; while Kelly records that the Puritan divines did much to incite their parishioners against the once popular amusement.¹

If we can produce no sermon of this period as an illustration of these feelings, the writings of divines serve the purpose well. In the early years before 1576 we remember that it was not the extreme churchmen only who attacked the stage. This was not so true after the Puritan party had definitely identified itself with the opposition. Members of the Episcopal church, to be sure, still shared to a certain extent its feelings. Bishop Hall, who with his high learning was ready to defend for James the ceremonies of the church, regretted the miseducation of the many English gentlemen that learned nothing but "to take smoke at a play-house."² But his general feelings toward the art were those of a critic. Launcelot Andrewes, likewise, the favorite court preacher of James, who in doctrine was so far from Puritanism that he upheld stoutly the Divine Right of Kings, and was almost inclined to belief in the real presence, was notwithstanding enough of a Puritan to number playgoers on the Sabbath among those ill employed.³ From his words on the Seventh Commandment, also, we can imagine how he would have expressed himself on the stage if forced to it. His silence, due, perhaps, to respect for his King's tastes, or to the example of the Bible itself in not specifically

¹ Kelly, p. 120-1.

² *Letters*, Decad. VI, Epist. vi.

³ *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, p. 284.

condemning dramatic abuses, was quite characteristic of his party. For the most part, members of the Established Church showed this lenient attitude, and were ready to tolerate the evils that they saw.

In consequence, it was from the practical Puritan ministers that the strength of the attack came. The *Practise of Christianitie* spoke plainly against all wanton exhibitions,¹ and *The Covenant between God and Man* condemned plays utterly.² It quoted with approval Cyprian's words against training youth to act, which, in the early days, even Northbrooke had explained away; and concluded: "Stage-playing and enterludes, are euen Satans shop or schoole-house to bring up prentices and young scholers to the Art and mysterie of whoredome and Adulterie."

Another direct and sweeping, though not extended, censure of the drama is found in *The Summe of Sacred Divinitie*³ written about 1630 by John Downham, a Puritan divine. Under the Seventh Commandment he condemned wanton songs, and the lascivious love-scenes in interludes, as directly contrary to the teaching of the apostle who bade man abstain from all evil. Earlier still, in 1622, John Brinsley, a Puritan theologian, numbered stage-plays among certain exotic vices that were hastening for England the coming captivity.⁴ Many of them, he said, were "fitter for the stewes in Italy, then the Gospell in England," and were "cried out of by so many good parents, chiefly in London" as the cause of their children's ruin. Again, in speaking of the profanation of the Lord's day, he asked what defense was possible for plays, in which were "the continuall sowing of all filthy and noysome lusts into the hearts of poore, simple soules"; and in which "every filthy speech, every whorish gesture" was a "fire brand cast by Satan." Such were not the ways of God, in Brinsley's mind, especially on

¹ *Practise of Christianitie*, by R. R. (Richard Rogers), p. 137.

² By "I. P.," date 1616, p. 381-3.

³ *Summe of Sacred Divinity*, p. 203.

⁴ *True Watch*, Part 3, chap. 11, abominations 19 and 30.

the Sabbath; and how then could the play-haunter possibly escape?

Finally, we find William Ames, one of Perkins's pupils at Cambridge, following the lead of his teacher as he attempted in his *Cases of Conscience* to apply specifically the general principles of Christian morality. There in the section *Of immodest Luxury*,¹ Ames replied to the question, "What is to bee thought of stage Playes," in these words, "Such stage playes as are now in use, are utterly to be condemned." For the ordinary play consisted of the lively representation of vice and wickedness, while still more objectionable, though less vile, were the dramatizations of sacred story, in which God's word was "debated, spoiled and abused." One point noted by him is quite unusual. Thinking of the French actresses he wrote, "Either Women are brought upon the stage to represent wantonnes with impudency (who ought even in the Church to keepe silence) . . . or men for to please, put on Womens apparell, face, and gesture; which is repugnant to the word of God." His conclusion was that plays were a carnal pleasure and a waste of money, and the passion-ruled players deservedly infamous in the eyes of the law. In theory he seemed at the start not to condemn the classic theater; but for England he despaired of a drama unstained by vice. In short, he saw no course but total abolition, an extremity to which many an art-loving man had been forced, and the distinguishing position of the Puritan divine.

The existence of similar feelings among the laity is proved in bits of scattered evidence. Though nothing can be deduced from the pretended prognostication for the year 1623 in *Vox Graculi* concerning the author's ideas on the subject,² his comment that the commonwealth afforded players not their due deserts suggests that they must have fallen considerably in popular esteem. Likewise we read that when ambassador Boischoet was to be entertained at Cambridge, "there was a great contest between the seniors

¹ Book V, chap. 39.

² Collier, I, 433.

and juniors of Trinity College about plays; it was referred to the Lord Keeper, and by him to the King, the seniors saying, that the times demanded rather prayers and fasting, than plays and feasting; this was ill taken and the plays ordered, but after all, the King does not go to Cambridge."¹

Further indications of the growing opposition are traceable even in the Court's action. Charles, like James, had been forced to forbid Sunday plays. In 1615, as a concession to the feeling of his own churchmen, the Master of the Revels was forbidden to grant any more "Lenten Dispensations" for performances in Lent.² In 1620, also, the project of building a new theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields had to be abandoned when James, out of respect for public sentiment, withdrew the permission that he had previously granted.³ Similar deference was shown in 1626 in the license given to Nathaniel Giles to train the singing boys of the Chapel, which license contained the new clause: "Provided always, and we straightly charge and command, that none of the said choristers or children of the Chappell . . . shalbe used or imployed as Comedians or Stage Players, or to exercise or acte any stage-plaies, interludes, comedies or Tragedies: for that it is not fitt or desent that such as should sing the Praises of God Almighty should be trained or imployed in such lascivious and prophane exercises."⁴ In earlier times no scruple had been felt about letting the boys present comedies. To this instance the arrest of the players at Banbury in 1633 can add little.⁵ This rising sentiment was hailed with delight by the writers of the period. The author of the *Refutation* said expressly that no Christian people frequented the theater; others whom we have quoted noticed how plays were daily condemned; Prynne and the author of the *Refutation* bear witness to the great number of pulpit denunciations. Even ministers as far removed from Puritanism as Hall and Andrewes censured certain

¹ *State Papers*, 1623, p. 495.

² Collier, I, 394.

³ Reprinted in *English Drama and Stage*, p. 56-7.

⁴ Fleay, p. 343.

⁵ *State Papers*, 1633, p. 47; Collier, II, 46.

aspects of the stage; and men of conservative Puritan principles like Brinsley and especially Ames, who at bottom evidently saw good in some old plays, were forced to the most extreme position. All this is striking testimony to the growth of Puritan sentiment.

Two further sorts of evidence convince us of this fact. The first is but a piece of individual biography; but because its subject, Ben Jonson, was a man of so much strength, we attach great importance to it. It was at the request of Jonson that Selden expressed his views on the validity of one of the main arguments against the stage,¹ an interesting bit of testimony, since it shows that even the independent dramatist and critic had been impelled by Puritan censors to seek advice of the greatest scholar of his time. The other indication of the influence exerted by the Puritans is seen in the apologies offered by the latest defenders of the drama. The theater, to be sure, was still popular, and by some unreservedly commended. Stow, in recording the rebuilding of the Globe and the rising of the Fortune, showed amazement at its popularity in 1629;² and Sir Thomas Roe, writing to Sir Robert Anstruther, gave his unqualified approval of plays as an occupation serviceable in keeping the people from meddling with state affairs.³ But though the theater was still popular, its defenders, in recognition of the strength of the Puritan cause, had usually more apologies to offer for its sins than had Roe.

On this account Lupton's favorable opinion of the play-house in 1632 is more typical. Compared with his condemnation of the Bear-Garden, his character sketch of the theater is significant.⁴ It concludes with these words: "They [actors] have no great reason to love puritans, for they hold their calling unlawful. . . . When men are here [the play-house] and when at church, they are of contrary minds; there they think the time too long, but here too short. . . . As an ale-house in the country is be-

¹ See chapter 7, p. 100.

² *Survey*, p. 103-4.

³ *State Papers*, 1630, p. 370. Laneham in 1575 used the same argument.

⁴ *Louidon and Country*, p. 321-3.

holden to a wild schoolmaster, so an whore-house to some of these; for they both spend all they get. Well; I like them well, if when they act vice, they will leave it: and when virtue, they will follow. I speak no more of them: but when I please, I will come and see them." Here our Theophrastus, as he sanctions plays, acknowledges, though with a careless snap of his fingers, the evil which environed them.

Because such recognition of the evil associated with the theater is stronger in the defense offered by Richard Brathwait, his words are even more significant. In considering in the *English Gentleman* the recreations used by men of quality, he gave the verdict that playgoing, one of their favorite pastimes, if "used with Moderation," was not "altogether to be disallowed."¹ In this half-hearted way he began his answer to the objections commonly and "worthily" brought against plays. Of course, he saw nothing wrong in the use of feminine attire by players; Beza, he remembered, allowed this. Nor did he regard plays as more vain than all other earthly things, since much good could be derived from them. Without sanctioning excessive mirth or evil words, he set aside, also, the Puritan aversion to laughter and the idle words of the play-house, and to the idolatry of their exhibitions. The criticism of Plato he offset with the fact that Saint Paul himself had used the words of poets, to prove that their fictions might be lawfully used. He then cited instances in which kings had fitly honored bards, among others, Richard's patronage of Chaucer, "the father of English poets." But those players who scoffed at religion or state he would have whipped, and "the daily frequenting" of plays, which left gentlemen no leisure for devotion or godliness, he would suppress.²

¹ pp. 103-9.

² Here he told the story of the woman who on her death bed could not appeal to God for mercy; but called only for Jeronimo. Prynne told the same story the next year, (see chap. 15, p. 171), illustrating again the common repetition of the arguments.

In the *English Gentlewoman* Brathwait went still further in recognizing the social dangers of the theater.¹ As he mapped out a course of conduct befitting a young lady, he spoke very distinctly against the frivolous waste of time at the play-house. In her place at the play the fashionable lady reminded him of the bee—not the busy bee, however, but the buzzing bee. His belief, indeed, is clearly expressed that a woman who frequented the theater to any extent would lose not only her good name, but, since occasion leads to evil, her virtue as well.

Thus the last defender of the stage, who conveniently summed up the arguments on both sides just before the publication of the great treatise against plays, had far less to say on the benefits of the stage, and far more on its dangers and abuse, than earlier apologists. Prynne, after all, was not wholly astray when he ranked Brathwait of his party. And though Brathwait wrote in the style of the character book, his purpose was sufficiently serious to illustrate well the growth of sentiment against the stage. He admitted the worthiness and strength of the Puritan argument based on the word of God, and saw the evil of the play-house. Yet he was not a Puritan, because, notwithstanding the evil that he saw, he refused to sacrifice what he thought might be a commendable diversion and instruction. With him, therefore, we close our survey of the growth of public opinion in the years which prepared the way for the great exponent of the Puritan cause.

¹ pp. 286, 297-9, 339.

CHAPTER 15.

WILLIAM PRYNNE.

One who remembers the course through which the question of the lawfulness of stage-plays was prepared for its last great expression, will find the character of that expression in part accounted for. Since the sentiment against the drama had grown till it was voiced by men of all professions, especially in the ever increasing Puritan body; since the arguments, after an early development, had advanced steadily in completeness and bitterness; and since the church and court by measures of exasperation and tyranny hastened this growth, one can easily surmise the nature of the great attack of 1633. To be really expressive of the latest Puritan sentiment, this work had to be both more embracing and more extreme than its predecessors. It was forced to summarize more completely than the *Shorte Treatise* had done the arguments of its forerunners; to rehearse more at large than the *Refutation* had done the feelings of antiquity; and above all to betray, in a degree determined by the character of the author, the heightened tension felt throughout the Puritan world. With these points in mind one is prepared for the last great expression of the Puritan aversion, the work of William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix, the Players Scourge*.

Having obtained a knowledge of the historical setting of this work, it is essential now to acquire a sense of its subjective element. Of all Englishmen who attacked the stage, the career of William Prynne was the most varied and interesting.¹ He was born in 1600 in the town of Swainswick, several miles from Bath. In his father's plain but comfortable home the first lessons of Puritanism were learned, and the spirit then received was fostered by the

¹ Bruce's fragment of Prynne's life is published in *Documents Relating to William Prynne*. See also *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.*

stirring years of his boyhood. At the time of the Gunpowder Plot his grandfather was sitting for Bath in the House of Commons, and the excitement following the discovery of that conspiracy undoubtedly filled the boy's heart with party rancor. In 1611 the Authorized Version of the Bible was issued, to replace the Geneva translation of which all Puritans were so fond, and this, too, he must have heard discussed. Then, in 1616 leaving the Bath grammar school, Prynne went to Oxford, which under Laud's influence was gradually turning from sympathy with Geneva to a more and more anti-Puritan, Anglo-Catholic attitude in church matters. Here, therefore, Prynne early faced the enemy, and his heart was filled with disgust and hatred. Consequently, by the time of his admission to Lincoln's Inn in 1621, where the influence of the lecturer, John Preston, and where the soberer life that distinguished that body from the other Inns of Court only strengthened the trait, his militant spirit was already well formed.

Under conditions so qualified to intensify whatever of intolerance lurked in his nature, Prynne started in life. From the beginning, he combined with his legal work theological studies. His first book was published in 1627—a treatise on theology, which was followed soon by three separate attacks on the doctrines of Arminianism. But at the same time he took an active interest in the reformation of the manners of the age, and assailed the follies of Elizabethan England, for example the custom of drinking healths, and the extravagant head-dress then fashionable, as virulently as he could have done a positive vice. If such foibles roused his wrath, it is not strange that the great and widely recognized evils of the drama should have attracted his attention. By the year 1624 he began work untiringly on his *Histrio-Mastix*. Throughout the long imprisonment which followed its publication, his pen was never idle in the attack on the arbitrary rule of Bishops and Kings. As a reward, when the Long Parliament assembled, he was liberated and restored to the position and degree of

which he had been deprived. Immediately he reciprocated all the animosity Laud had shown in his persecution, heaping not the metaphorical coals of fire on the Archbishop's head. But it was not the ecclesiastical party alone that suffered his reviling. He soon took up the cause against Milton's doctrine of divorce, and fought the growth of Independency with all the vehemence of his nature. Next, in 1647, he turned again to politics, upholding Presbyterianism against the encroachments of the army. For this he was arrested a few days after Pride's Purge, and from that time forth the Commonwealth bore the wrath of his invective pen. Thus estranged from his old party, when, on the fall of Richard Cromwell, the Long Parliament reassembled, Prynne's attempts to take his old seat were repelled. Hence the busy pamphleteer was thrown into a new warfare in behalf of the "excluded members," till finally he was readmitted in time to take a prominent part in the action against the army and its despotism, and in welcoming the new order of things. Thus the man who had once been branded "Seditious Libeller" because of his *Histrio-Mastix*, was regarded as the "Cato of his age" by a leading Royalist. But great as the change of view may seem, his heart was still the same. Though his intolerance and blind zeal had drawn him from his early friends to hatred of the Puritan rule, he was still the same uncompromising Presbyterian. He died unmarried in Lincoln's Inn in 1669, and there was buried where he so long had worked in solitude over his books, a type, like Burton and Fuller, of the omnivorous reader of the day, but unlike them possessed of neither moderation nor Christian charity.

Such was the life and training of the man who has come to stand as the final leader and grand martyr of the Puritan cause. He does not stand before the world as a man possessed of the calm and dignified spirit of Northbrooke, nor of the worldly knowledge and the humor of the penitent-Gosson, nor finally of the keen eye and interesting descriptive power of Stubbes. His very mode of life forbade any

such wisdom or calm vision. His *Histrio-Mastix* is important, rather, because in that quaint, dumpy little volume of some eleven hundred pages is massed all the force of previous attacks on the stage—the condemnations of heroes of old, the anathemas of the Fathers, and the writings even of those “punier times” in which Prynne himself lived. It was the encyclopædic reference work of the attack, collecting and classifying, but adding little to the contribution of the past. And even its usefulness in that capacity was destroyed by its blind zeal. For Prynne refused to restrain himself within the ample grounds allowed by justice, and respected by his many forerunners; he dissipated by his invective the favorable opinion prepared in advance for him, so that his book represents the extreme of intolerance and unreason which the Puritan argument ever reached.

The history of Prynne’s book is most interesting. The author was inspired to his task by the recollection of those four wicked plays to which he had been enticed while yet a “novice” by carnal-minded companions. With this extensive basis for Baconian induction, and with apparently no greater familiarity with English dramatic literature, he set to work as early as 1624 to digest and classify the “play condemning passages” from all known sources. True, he wished to publish sooner, and was forestalled only by Dr. Harris’ refusal of a license. This indiscretion caused that gentleman some years later real contrition, as he thought how the book had since appeared in a form “seven times bigger and seven times worse.”¹ For Prynne returned to his task with undiminished energy, and when at last the book slipped through the licenser’s hands, Laud himself, thoroughly acquainted as he was with the capabilities of his age in the production of mighty folios, asserted that the mere reading of the works cited by Prynne would occupy sixty years of a man’s life.

It is really amusing to think from what a slight cause the book grew through those laborious years in comprehen-

¹ *Rushworth*, II, 226.

siveness and detail. Perhaps the scope of *Histrio-Mastix*, its two tragedies with their thirteen acts and countless scenes, fully equipped with prologues, choruses, catastrophes, and the other incidental paraphernalia of the buskined stage, can be most readily seen by a glance at the well-crowded title-page, and at the margins stuffed with references and quotations from all sources. Earlier opponents of the drama had shown the same wish to fortify their position with the authority of the Fathers, as they fairly might do; but in "marginal Prynne," as Milton dubbed him,¹ this spirit was carried to the extreme. In the preface he explained that the countless quotations were made "onely for the Readers better satisfaction," not at all for vainglorious ostentation, and the never-ceasing repetition of the same authority, only that new vistas of the subject might be thereby opened to the reader's view. He falsely assumed that to all mankind the maxims of antiquity brought as much of comfort as they did to himself. He had, however, a further reason for such an array of authority. From *Histrio-Mastix*, as from other writings of the day, we see clearly that the term Puritan had become a bitter taunt, and that the reviled were smarting under the attack. Reflections of this feeling, together with Prynne's passages of sturdy defense, add spice and savor to the dull old book. "In these our dayes; wherein Stage-playes almost cry down Sermons,"² and when "Paganizing Actors and Play-haunters . . . hate, revile and slander, all zealous, practicall Christians, under the Tearmes of Puritanes, Prescitioners, Novellers, Factionists, Holy-breathren, Men of the Spirit, Bible-beares, Sermon-haunters, Hypocrites, Holy-sisters, and a world of such like ignominious, disgracefull tearmes,"³ Prynne felt called on to defend those "Magistrates Ministers or Professors of Religion," who were brought upon the stage⁴ "to deride, and jeer them, for that which most commends them to God and all good men." Surely

¹ Original draft of *Colasterion*; see Masson, III, 470.

² p. 532.

³ p. 543.

⁴ p. 875.

the scorned were "the holiest, the devoutest, the eminentest and most religious gracious Saints, who leade the strictest, purest, heavenliest, godliest lives, outstripping all others both in the outward practice, and inward power of grace."¹ Yet public prejudice was so great against these holy men that many, at least of the timid, preferred to sacrifice their scruples on a matter like that of the theater than to bear the ridicule of the godless. Therefore Prynne was anxious to show that in his opposition to plays there was nothing of "puritanicall singularity."² On the whole, Prynne saw nothing new in his position. If he was a Puritan in regard to plays, so also were the Fathers, the Apostles and even Christ himself. Other writers had felt the same, and there can be no doubt but that the Fathers would have supported him in every assertion. Nevertheless, the reader smiles at Prynne's enthusiasm as he often in the margin calls attention to the wisdom of some holy writer, exclaiming, for example, of Chrysostom, "O that this elegant rhetoricall streame of this zealous flexanimous Father were but a little considered of the vitious Christians of our times!"³ He may even be inclined to question the trust placed by Prynne in such men as Ovid, feeling that they, though only pagans, may have been as vicious as Prynne's own countrymen. But to Prynne, Jew and Gentile, pagan and Christian, were all worthy of like credence in their "play condemning passages."

As for the book itself, it is divided into two parts or tragedies, the first of which contains the main strength of the attack, while the second reaffirms what has preceded, or answers objections to it. The main tragedy consists of eight acts, each one furnished with a correspondingly liberal number of scenes. These scenes usually open with the statement of a syllogism, of which the minor premise applies to the stage some general precept on religion or morals, all supported in so thorough and scholarly a way as to convert the staunchest devotee of the art. Thus the

¹ p. 802.² p. 454.³ p. 426, 71.

argument advances from syllogism to syllogism in a calm, solid fashion, never a step being taken without due preparation to insure its security. This of course warrants dry reading through much of the work. Prynne was not a man of the town, to parallel those descriptions of Gosson's or Stubbes'; he was rather a compiler and classifier. Yet at times his argument becomes interesting—especially in those passages of sustained invective where his knowledge of the English stage was sufficient to color his thoughts, or where the insults of his enemies raised his denunciation to eloquence.

Perhaps Prynne's spirit, his extreme scholarly method, his logical precision, his bitter heart, and his connection with earlier assailants, can best be revealed by an outline of the work which shall trace the main development of the tragedy without attempting to follow all its confusing cross-currents, with frequent quotation of salient parts given "onely for the readers better satisfaction." Prynne's hostility to plays was uncompromising. To be sure, with one of his strange inconsistencies, he did admit that in some stage-plays were "many commendable parts of history, poetry, invention, rhetoricke, art, wit, learning; together with much good language, and some sage Counsell too, all which are good and usefull in themselves."¹ This, however, is contradictory to Prynne's teaching and purpose. "Vice," an earlier scene stated, "hath the whole, at least the greatest share in all our Stageplaies; poore Virtue hardly findes a part in any, most parts in none."² And earlier still, in view of the unalloyed iniquity of plays, "their vanitie, and frothie discourse: their lasciuious complements, and wanton dalliance; their mispence of money, and that which farre transcends all treasures, of pretious, peerelesse time,"³ all compromise was rejected.

Thus at the start is given a fair summary of Prynne's radical and unswerving purpose. The argument then follows in this order. Plays are evil, first, because they are

¹ p. 789.² p. 97.³ p. 39.

1. the pomps of their inventor, the Devil, in subject, attire and manners.¹ And being the pomp of the Devil, though actors may gain "a little vaine applause vpon the Stage, which they put off with their Players robes," and "a little filthy gaine," which only brings harm to their heirs if not to themselves, he is the only real gainer by them. Having thus their origin in the Devil, and consecrated to him by all heathen peoples, plays should be altogether shunned by Christians.

Passing on from this outworn argument of the Fathers, who used it when it had real force and validity, plays are next condemned for their subject-matter. The scurrilous themes of comedy, and also the bloody and tyrannical crimes of tragedy, in themselves unfit for Christian ears, are rendered many times more insufferable by the persons acting in them²—gods, whores, drunkards, hypocrites, fools, ruffians, "pennie fathers," scolds, Turks, infidels, etc., etc. In fact, "There is scarce one Divell in Hell, hardly a notorious sinne or sinner upon earth, either of moderne or ancient times, but hath some part or other in Stage-playes."³ For instead of seeking the good, "Play-Poets and common Actors (the Divels chieftest Factors) rake earth and hell it selfe; . . . they travell over Sea and Land; over all Histories, poemes, countries, times and ages for unparallelled villanies, that so they may pollute the Theater."⁴

In still other respects the subject-matter of plays is wrong, the argument continues. What but profanity is it to act the parts of heathen gods, or even to utter their names; and what are plays but fabulous lies? They, moreover, abuse the name of God in their representations of sacred story, and make of it a jest for the stage. In fact, only the old Reformation plays were at all commendable; and that because in their time they furnished the sole means of furthering the Protestant cause. Those days, however, are gone. The plays of Elizabethan times, both those which render holiness an object of scorn, and even those, which,

¹ p. 46.² p. 62.³ p. 176, 87.⁴ p. 92.

with unchristian bitterness and publicity, seek to rebuke sinners, are wholly against God's teaching. Therefore the subject-matter of plays in general, of *Œdipus* or *King Lear* as well as of one of *Aristophanes'* or *Ford's*, is intolerable, being but "idle, frothy, superfluous, unprofitable; as vaine, as empty, as vanity it self."¹

Leaving with this wholesale condemnation plays themselves, the arraignment proceeds to the actors. These have been ranked by all ages as "usually the very filth and off-scouring, the very lewdest, basest, worst and most perniciously vitious of the sonnes of men."² John Rainoldes and earlier Puritans had been more ready to admit that some actors now and then might be honest, however corrupt the class as a whole might be. But to Prynne this was impossible. He especially felt that players learn to act in earnest the deeds feigned upon the stage, and soon become, alike in their shameless lives as in their desperate and impenitent deaths, the lowest class of the commonwealth.³

Similar judgment was passed on the play-haunters, who "have not so much as the least Symptomes of any Christianity in them."⁴ Since many, Prynne realized, would object that good Christians and even pious divines, resorted to plays, he explained this sweeping condemnation. With his conscience still troubling him, he admitted that some "puny, new converted Christian novices" might be ensnared into the play-house; but no mature person with any concern for right. Nor would any faithful minister, cognizant of the numerous ecclesiastical prohibitions, or heedful of his example in the world, be found there.⁵ To be sure, there were then too many "scandalous, Play-haunting Ecclesiastickes," yet he was still firm in this position. For "that many, that any gracious, godly, growen, faithfull Christians, who are thorowly instructed in the wayes of godlinesse, or in the noxious qualities of Playes, doe constantly, doe frequently resort to Play-houses, to Stage-playes (especially out of a loue or liking unto Playes themselves"), he utterly

¹ p. 127.² p. 133.³ p. 908.⁴ p. 427.⁵ p. 150.

denied. From the earlier attacks on the stage we see that it was a common argument in behalf of plays that ministers frequented them. But when the numerous qualifications of this "utter denial" have been illumined by the testimony of the unknown author of the *Refutation of the Apology for Actors*, as well as by the words of Puritan ministers, and even of Laud himself, we conclude that under the Stuart kings few divines allowed themselves this diversion, and that Prynne's assertion was not groundless.

Histrion-Mastix next considers the evil associations of the drama. Much of this section is repetition. Plays contain hypocrisy and lasciviousness, and effeminate the minds of actors and spectators, especially of those boys, who, by counterfeiting not only the appearance of women, in itself an abomination to the Lord, but even their manners and customs, deny their nature and degrade their noble sex.¹ Furthermore, plays are censured for their costly apparel and their dances. That pastime Prynne, heedless here, as usual, of the possible application of his words in court circles, denounced as abhorrent "even in Queenes themselves, and the very greatest persons, who are commonly most devoted to it."² Other offending features of plays were lewd songs, effeminate, suggestive music, and the "profuse, lascivious laughter" roused in the spectators by the sinful acts and jests, which "carnall life of iollity, prognosticks nothing but a voluptuous heart."³

Leaving with this the evil attributes of plays, Prynne proceeded to picture the degrading influences resulting from them. The first pernicious effect, felt especially in London, was genuinely Puritan—"the prodigall mispence of much precious time." And if one reckon, as he did, not merely the time spent by playwrights in production, by actors "in copying, in conning, in practising their parts," and by the lazy drones who left their tasks to attend to plays, but even the time spent by the carpenters in building the theaters, and by the least of those connected with them, as time taken from

¹ p. 167.² p. 236.³ p. 295.

honest labor and turned to Satan's service, the situation certainly appals one.¹ The second evil fruit of the play-house was like unto the first—the "prodigall, sinfull, vaine expence of money."² Many spent more on players than on preachers, and willingly hired "a Coach, a Boate, a Barge, to carry them to a Play-house every day, where they must pay deare for their admission, Seates and Boxes," who grudged a penny at the church. Thirdly, plays filled men with carnal thoughts and led them on to sin; for in them the "quintessence, the confluence of all obscenity" was "pithily contracted, emphatically expressed, elegantly adorned, rhetorically pronounced."³ To this aspect of the stage Gosson had directed his first attack; and of course in his complete manual Prynne gave it ample room. With this objection, Prynne, like all other writers, coupled the disturbances that were so common in and around the theaters. Of this he felt that experience needed no proof. For many players and playgoers, veritable Hotspurs, "not satisfied with the murder of one," had "embrued their barbarous unchristian hands in the blood of two, of three, if not of foure severall men," and yet, instead of "ruing the odiousnesse of these their bloody deeds," they gloried "in the number of their murthers as the very trophies of their valour."⁴ Altogether twenty evil effects of the stage, "as evident as the morning Sunne," are mentioned and explained; and most of them are social—the teaching of idleness, treachery, immodesty, atheism and the like. Prynne's style of writing tends to banish our sympathy; but we must forget his rabid vehemence, and remember that the majority of these evils were recognized by all, and that even staunch defenders of the dramatic art looked with distrust on the public play-house.

The desecration of the Sabbath meant as much to Prynne as to all other Puritans. It was the steady refusal of the actors to yield to growing feeling of the day's sacredness, or even to the laws passed for its observance, that, more than any other one thing, perhaps, increased the opposition to

¹ p. 305-7.² p. 310.³ p. 450-500.⁴ p. 519.

the stage. Naturally Prynne was on the alert against those who made "Theaters their Chappels, yea, Playes their weekly Sermons,"¹ growing thereby so familiar with stage diction that they could not "relish the language of Canaan, the dilect of Heaven, nor brooke the Scripture phrase."² This was Prynne's answer to Heywood's argument from the linguistic training given in the theater, and, taken with other passages,³ does much to corroborate conceptions already formed of the variance between the pulpit and the stage.

Because of these many evil fruits of plays, Prynne was unwilling to countenance any. Even private and academic performances, as opposed to thrift and holiness, he would entirely suppress.⁴ The day had passed when the average Puritan could sanction them, as he once had felt inclined to do. Consequently, Prynne condemned all those persons of quality who either acted in them or witnessed them; and note again how the royal family fell under his censure.

Clearly it was the evil influence of the play-house that meant most to Prynne. Therefore, though he lamented bitterly the popularity of play books, evinced by the fact that "Shackspeers Plaies are printed in the best Crowne paper, far better than most Bibles," and by the enormous production of them—forty thousand in the two years preceding his writing—the reading of plays he told the Christian Reader was less dangerous than the sight of them. The reader was spared, at least, the "wicked sights and the impromptu lewdness of the clowns, and was not so sorely tempted to love, rather than to abhor the evil."⁵ Prynne saw that playgoers would object that no such degradation came from the amusement. So he rejected their testimony in advance as worthless. They were, as he frankly assured them, "yet in the state of sinne and death," "altogether sencelesse of the growth and progresse of their corruptions," and unable to see the "daily increase of their beloved sinnes and lusts."⁶ Therefore he warned them to shun all plays,

¹ p. 148.² p. 521.³ p. 528.⁴ p. 491, 806.⁵ p. 930.⁶ p. 956.

since "the beholding of one lascivious Stage-play, though with prejudice, disaffection, and an absolute resolution against it, is able to corrupt and vitiate the very best spectators that resort unto it."¹ As a solemn warning he narrated the sad case of the woman who, after a life of slavery to plays, could not call to God for mercy, as she lay on her death bed, but cried continually, "Hieronimo, Hieronimo: O let me see Hieronimo acted," and so passed to her last reward.

In the six long acts here roughly outlined, Prynne arrayed his main arguments against the stage. In the seventh act he gathered his authorities in review into one grand army, marshaled "into seven distinct squadrons." They numbered over one hundred pages of Christian edicts and laws, the writings of all the Fathers and the ancients, and the words of over one hundred and fifty modern writers. Then, in the eighth and closing act, he replied to arguments brought forward in behalf of plays, arguing that the Bible condemns them in spirit, if not in words; that plays were not excusable, either as harmless, necessary diversions, or on account of their antiquity; that to call them as good as sermons was sheer blasphemy; and that opposition to them was confined to no narrow sect. A chorus ends the tragedy.

The second part of *Histrio-Mastix*, containing four acts, offers nothing in substance not already outlined in the preceding pages. In it the reader is led gradually up to the catastrophe of the two tragedies, which begins on the nine hundred and ninety-fifth page. Then comes Prynne's final warning: "If any therefore henceforth perish by frequenting Stage-playes, after this large discovery of their sin-engendring soule-condemning qualities, their sinne, their blood shall light upon their owne heads, not on mine, who have taken all this paines to doe them good. All then I shall desire of you in recompence of my labour, is but this; that as I have acted my part in oppugning, so you would now play your parts to in abominating, in abandoning, Stage-

¹ p. 549.

playes, without which this Play-refuting Treatise, will doe no good, but hurt unto your soules, by turning your sinnes of ignorance, into sinnes of knowledge and rebellion. The labour of it hath beene mine alone; my desire, my prayer is and shall bee, that the benefit, the comfort of it may be yours, the Republiques, and the glory, Gods."

Besides giving a summary of this rare old book, we hope that our outline has made plain two things—the comprehensive scope of the work, and its blind intolerance. In connection with the first point, however, we note at once two shortcomings. We see that it is a compilation, not an original treatise; a work based more on study and reflection than on actual experience. It affords no trustworthy information in regard to the stage—a few facts concerning the composition of audiences, a little of the popularity of those forty thousand play books, and something of the mode of transportation to the houses. These facts could all have come to Prynne indirectly; and that they did is suggested by his lament over the "daily" performances, made with no apparent realization that Sunday plays in his time, though not wholly stopped, were less frequent than they once had been. Even if his words were based on indirect evidence, they are significant on that very account; they at least show what phases of the stage situation were most commonly talked of in Puritan circles.

If the value of *Histrion-Mastix* is thus slight as a guide book to the old London resorts, its value as an encyclopædic survey of the subject—for such it is—is weakened by the proneness of its author to misinterpret his authorities. Prynne vouched in his preface for the honesty of his citations, and we do not at all doubt his sincerity. But in the use of all three of his sources—the law, the writings of the Fathers, and the works of classical authors, his method was far from accurate. Noy, the prosecuting attorney, accused him of misinterpreting the law against vagabonds, since that law applied only to strolling companies.¹ But the preju-

¹ Rushworth, I, 225.

dice against rogues was of such long standing that we can excuse even an utter barrister for the error; and so also can all his other misrepresentations be explained without impeaching his honesty.

On the legal side, Prynne showed himself familiar with the few and unimportant statutes against actors, and not at all familiar with the more important proclamations in their favor. His survey of his sources had evidently been one-sided, or his memory retained only the adverse measures. Then, in his references to the Fathers, the passages to which he refers often contain no direct mention of the stage. Thus Augustine's words on the warfare between the spirit and the flesh, as they lodged in Prynne's memory, bore directly on the subject he was studying. But one less wrapped up in the question finds there no explicit reference. Evidently Prynne was predisposed to find, or to remember, passages to his purpose. Nevertheless, he cannot be said to have misstated the feelings of the Fathers. Their hostility to the drama could scarcely be exaggerated. It was when Prynne applied these methods to pagan writers, whose concern was not moral, that he fell into error, and here justification is more difficult.

Prynne's interpretation of Plutarch is quite characteristic of his general method. After debating the source of Athens' glory, Plutarch came to the Platonic, or, as we should say, Philistine conclusion, that since historians merely relate the deeds of others, they yield to them in honor, and since tragedy had never built any city walls, or averted any national disaster, but concerned itself wholly with fiction, it held no place with truth.¹ Immediately Prynne concluded that Plutarch stood with him. He forgot entirely Plutarch's essay on the proper method of studying poetry, where, though admitting that poetic fiction might mislead youth, he held that with proper instruction even tragedy could be made a guide to virtuous life. So also from Horace, who as a critic had something to say of the crude-

¹ *Glory of the Athenians.*

ness of the early theater, and as a citizen, of the degraded condition of actors, Prynne gathered these sentiments, and failed entirely to seize the artistic and literary purpose of the poet's life. Cicero's condemnation of tragedy and comedy for their foundation respectively in illicit love and debauchery is duly noted,¹ yet his express statement that under proper supervision the theater could be kept untainted,² and the whole *Oration for Archias*, with its cordial praise of Ennius and Roscius, whom Cicero respected for his personal character as well as for his attainments, and with its dignified plea for culture, lie unnoticed. These are fair illustrations of Prynne's general spirit.

We can hardly understand how Prynne could have thus passed over whole essays and orations, to have fixed his attention on details not expressive of the author's real mind. He misinterpreted even his immediate contemporaries in the same way, Braithwait, for example, which certainly he would not have done purposely. His tendency may be explained in this way. From the margins of Northbrooke, Rainoldes, and old folios like that of Thomas Aquinas, he probably culled the numerous references to ancient authors, and, in verifying them, took no pains to examine the general context. Or even in his own reading he jotted down merely the passage that interested him, and forgot the rest. But since we never find him falsifying in a direct quotation, we do not question his honesty.

In this way one comes to agree with Atkins, who said that his friend Prynne was sincere and well meaning, though totally devoid of moderation.³ It may be a natural tendency to scoff at the work, to ridicule its spirit, and, forgetful of its historical justification, to reject as too intolerant for consideration not it alone, but the whole cause. Yet if Prynne's statements are reduced from the *n*'th to the first power, and expressed in a sane fashion, they lose their absurdity. That there was nothing false in Prynne's main

¹ *Fourth Tusculan Disputation*, 30-34.

² *De Legibus*, II, 15.

³ Rushworth, II, 229.

contention is revealed by the stand taken by conservative men. *Histrion-Mastix* was not welcomed by men of either party, and to actors it was a favorite object of ridicule. But of direct and outspoken reply to his book as a players' scourge Prynne had to bear less than his predecessors—a proof of the preparation that had gone before. Even in the Star Chamber his accusers made no attempt to defend the stage. Many undoubtedly agreed with Laud that a good play could be no harm, though they themselves did not indulge in the diversion;¹ yet apparently all agreed with Noy and Coke that it was no time to uphold the art.² It was not for its attack on the stage that *Histrion-Mastix* was questioned. At the time, Pagett wrote to a friend that its offense was ecclesiastical, a significant bit of testimony, since Pagett had not seen the book, and was reporting what he had heard among his fellow barristers.³ George Gresley, however, stated the truth more closely when he said that the chief offense of the book was its insult to the Queen.⁴ The Earl of Dorset wittily called the prisoner "this minor Prophet, Prophet Prynne," and significantly enough his evident love of alliteration did not induce him to include plays in the new name he suggested for the book—"The Damnation of Prince, Prelacy, Peers and People."⁵

So all agreed with Noy that it was proper to write against plays if it was done in mannerly terms, and not in the style of "Oyster-women at Billingsgate."⁶ The common verdict, however, was that Prynne had not done this. Unfortunately, his vehemence had swept him along from censure of the stage to at least implied condemnation of the greatest persons and institutions of the realm. His argument touched the church to the quick in the passage that classed church music, so mad that "Hickscorner himselfe could not devise a more wanton pastime," with the evil music of the

¹ *Prynne Documents*, p. 27; *Verney Papers*, p. 158.

² *Prynne Documents*, p. 2, 22.

³ *Court and Times of Charles I*, II, 222.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁵ Rushworth, II, 238.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 225.

day,¹ as well as in the implication that Christ was a Puritan, and in the statement that the Sabbath began on Saturday evening. It seemed also to advocate treason and open revolt against those magistrates who patronized the stage. It also spoke indirectly against the King in its censure of lovers of private theatricals and of dancers.² But most serious of all was its marginal comment on the French actresses at Blackfriars, whose work was termed "an impudent, shamefull, unwomanish, graceless, if not more then whorish attempt,"³ and the term of ignominy applied to women actors in the Table of Contents. These seemed, or could easily be made to seem, to have reference to the Queen and her ladies. For either just before or just after the book was issued,⁴ the Queen acted in Montague's play, and was thus included in the shameless class. It was for this four-fold offense that Prynne was brought to trial.

Fleay seems to regard the accusation against Prynne as sound.⁵ The Table at the end, and the passage in the latter part of the book which applied to the King, he thinks must have been written at least after the Queen's intention to act had become known, and that therefore Laud was justified in bringing him before the Star Chamber. This we are inclined to doubt. Rumor might easily have passed by a man of Prynne's habits. The explanation given by Whitelocke, though prejudiced, is illuminating. He attributed all the vengeance to Laud, who, angered at Prynne's writings against Arminianism, took *Histrion-Mastix* to the King the day after the play to exhibit the objectionable parts, and, when his Majesty remained apathetic, hired Heylyn to gather the "scandalous passages" from the book to rouse his anger.⁶ His view is certainly extreme; but Laud both before and after this time showed hatred toward his old opponent; and Whitelocke was at least not wrong in attributing the persecution to malice.

¹ *Histrion-Mastix*, p. 283. Noy made this charge, Rushworth, II, 224-6. ² p. 708. ³ p. 414.

⁴ The two different contemporary statements are given in *The Court and Times of Charles I*, II, 223-4. ⁵ p. 344-6.

⁶ *Memorials*, I, 52.

Against these serious charges Prynne's supporters testified that the prisoner had always been temperate and loyal, and that he regretted that his style had been "soe tarte, bitter, and transported."¹ Their aim was to offset the charge that "in the memory of man there never arose such a pestilent, factious, seditious person, both in Church and State, and soe great an enemy to both."² The technical defense was that the book had been duly licensed, and that it could in no wise have reflected upon the Queen, since the printing had been begun four years before the issue, and even the index had been bound up with the rest before Christmas time. The defense, however, was fruitless. Few were as gracious as his friend, Mr. Holborn, who refused to believe all the "fowle thinges" said of him, though forced to admit that in "tearmes and invectives" his friend had "much offended." For this fourfold offense Prynne was sentenced in the Star Chamber to lose both his ears in the pillory, to be branded on the cheeks "S. L."—Seditious Libeler, to suffer a fine of five thousand pounds, and, finally, to be expelled from Lincoln's Inn, deprived of his degree and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Severe and vindictive as the decree was, there were a few of the Lords still unsatisfied.³ Laud had Prynne punished a second time in the pillory in 1637.⁴ Thus he suffered all the extreme sentence save life imprisonment, which a later Parliament nullified.⁵ And in one way it was well that he did. For until his suffering he appeared a bitter fanatic. Only when we read of his patient endurance of imprisonment and the loss of his books, do we get a glimpse of the

¹ *Prynne Documents*, 14; Rushworth, II, 220-30.

² *Prynne Documents*, 33. Laud made this charge as we see from Prynne's reply, (*Harleian Misc.*, IX, 201-18.)

³ *Verney Papers*, p. 158.

⁴ Prynne's speech from the pillory complained of the severity of his punishment, *Harleian Misc.*, IV, 12-26.

⁵ The successive steps taken for Prynne's liberation are given in Rushworth, IV, p. 20, 67, 74-7, 228.

finer side of his stern nature.¹ The firmness, also, with which he gave his defense and vouched for his loyalty wins our respect. On the way home from his second pillorying he wrote:²

Triumphant I returne, my face discriyes
Laud's scorching Scarrs,
God's gratefull sacrifice.
S. L. Stigmata Laudis.

Thus the forged retraction of *Histrion-Mastix* that appeared in 1649, to be bitterly disowned by its alleged author, was utterly foreign to Prynne's spirit save in its closing words, "I was never afrayed to suffer in a good cause."

¹ D'Ewes in 1634 wrote of his visit to his friend in prison, and of his patience and serenity there. D'Ewes, II, 104-5.

² *Prynne Documents*, p. 90.

CHAPTER 16.

CLOSING YEARS OF THE CONTROVERSY.

Thus for over five years the Prynne case was kept before the public. Yet strangely it at first attracted little attention.¹ Gresley wrote of Prynne's probable punishment with no show of feeling in either direction.² That there was no greater demonstration in behalf of the prisoner indicates the predominance of more important questions in the people's minds. But the case was kept alive, and after the second punishment attracted more attention, probably because the popular preacher Burton stood with Prynne on that occasion. Yet even at the second pillorying we learn that "the humours of the people were various, some wept, some laught, and some were verie reserved."³ These latter, I imagine, were the Pym and Cromwells who realized the work of coming years; and among them, the chief sufferer was least moved of all.

The unseen effect of the Prynne case on the minds of such thoughtful men cannot be directly estimated. With more certainty we can trace the immediate consequence of *Histrion-Mastix*, first, on the lovers of the theater, and secondly, on the stage itself. The most conspicuous reply to Prynne was made by the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, in a form resembling the *Play of Plays* of Gosson's time.⁴ The narrative of the interesting affair is given by Whitelocke, one of its leaders.⁵ Soon after the publication of *Histrion-Mastix* the members of the Inns arranged a splendid masque to be given on Candlemas night; for it had been hinted by those in royal favor that such a spectacle would be appreciated by the Sovereigns, coming, as it were, as a

¹ Traill, IV, 166.

² See chapter 15, p. 175.

³ *Prynne Documents*, p. 87.

⁴ For other replies by dramatists, see Part II, p. 222-3.

⁵ Whitelocke, *Memorials*, I, 53-63.

timely repudiation of that attack. Details of the plan were arranged by a committee of the members, on which were Noy, Selden, Edward Herbert and Whitelocke. Under Whitelock's direction Simon Ives and Lawes composed the airs for the musical part of the entertainment. Great pains were taken by all concerned; and even Lincoln's Inn, forgetful of her former "play opugning actions" commended by Prynne, vied with the rest to make it a success.

When the appointed evening came, the procession left the Inns in splendid array, filing slowly through the crowded streets to Whitehall. At the head marched twenty footmen, leading the way for the grand marshal, Darrel of Lincoln's Inn. Following him rode a hundred gentlemen, twenty-five from each house, handsomely attired and nobly mounted. Then came groups of antimaskers giving a mirthful variety to the scene of splendor—a company of beggars riding on lean jades, another of birds, but, most popular of all with the civic Puritans who lined the streets, a mask satirizing those projectors who begged the illegal and unpopular patents of monopoly from the King. Then followed the rest of the mask proper, and finally the four splendid chariots of the grand maskers, adorned each in a certain color. In the first chariot sat the four leaders of Gray's Inn, for the dice had favored them with the post of honor, accompanied by eight footmen, and then, in the same handsome costume, followed the other twelve. At Whitehall, where seats were reserved for the members of the Inns, the mask was "incomparably performed," and the Queen herself, setting a gracious example for the other noble ladies, danced with some of the performers.

Her Majesty was so delighted with the entertainment that it was performed again at her request at Merchant Taylors' Hall. The total cost incurred by the Inns in these two evenings exceeded twenty-one thousand pounds. But the cordial thanks given by the King and Queen in person to Whitelocke and the other leaders more than repaid them for the time and money spent in this remarkable demonstration of loyalty and affection.

The Triumph of Peace with all its splendor passed, and the famous reply to Prynne is now known only to a few. But in the same year another dramatic entertainment, which purposely or accidentally offered the best answer to the Puritan position, was produced at Ludlow Castle. It was the mask *Comus*, whose Puritan author was not ashamed even at this time to clothe his thoughts on purity and virtue in dramatic garb. It conveys no hint of the bitter controversy that was waging; but Milton, serene as ever in the confidence of his own right, gave this object-lesson, to be repeated after the Restoration in his *Samson Agonistes*, that dramatic writing can be noble and uplifting and still be great.

As to the effect of *Histrion-Mastix* on stage morality no one can speak with certainty. During these years the moral improvement in the drama was due at least in part to this culmination of the Puritan attack; but of course many another denunciation bore to the same end. And although further treatises against the stage were precluded by the systematic thoroughness of *Histrion-Mastix*, and perhaps by the fate of its author, nevertheless the old-time criticism still continued. In 1636, Henry Burton, a Puritan divine once high in the King's favor, preached two sermons against the innovations and popish leanings of the bishops. These sermons, later published under the title *For God and the King*, caused his imprisonment and exposure with Prynne in the pillory.¹ Hence it is interesting to find in them a reference to stage-plays. He censured those "pious, holy, reverend, grave gracious Prelates," who, in their entertainment of the King at the Universities, had substituted interludes for the old-time disputations "in disgrace of that which is the greatest beauty of our religion, to wit, true piety and virtue."² Burton then continued: "Was this a time, then of entertaining the Court and poisoning their

¹ Hanbury, I, 549-50.

² Elizabeth in 1564 was so entertained at Cambridge in the daytime; but in the evening she enjoyed plays. Holinshed, IV, 225.

ears with Interludes, and thereby provoking the Lord further to plague the King's good people, when you should rather have moved his majesty, whom you and we all know to be forward enough to hearken to such a motion, to have called a true Fast, with prayer and preaching over the Land?"

To our previous evidence concerning the prevalence of such feelings we can here add but little. Take, for example, the request made by the students of Oxford that their costumes lent at the King's request should not be used upon the common stage;¹ or the mention made by Thomas Cranley of the low character of certain female habitués of the theater;² or the fact that in Leicester the popularity of the stage suffered seriously after 1633.³ Private plays met with similar adversity. In 1639 Robert Read wrote to his cousin, "The mask was performed last Tuesday night, myself being so wise as not to see it. They say it was very good, but I believe the disorder was never so great at any."⁴ So the spirit of Rainoldes' *Overthrow*, which itself had gone into its second edition ten years earlier, was kept alive. With the decline of plays, the station held by players and their friends of course was lowered in the minds of the people. It is interesting to note that one of the witnesses of the will of John Busby was challenged and excluded because he had become a frequenter of taverns and play-houses, and had said that he, a minister, could earn more by playing than by preaching.⁵ Willis in 1639 reflected well this general sentiment. He was describing, like Lamb, his vivid recollections of his first play, and by them reminded of the permanence of such impressions, he was convinced of the influence objectionable plays—and those of his own day he called "schoolmasters of vice"—had in corrupting youth.⁶

¹ *Court and Times of Charles I*, II, 266.

² Collier's *S. R.*, I, 76.

³ Kelly, p. 120.

⁴ *State Papers*, 1639, p. 365.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1633, p. 86.

⁶ Quoted by Collier, II, 275, n.

Many more there were in those dark days who felt the same toward plays. For in spite of all laws, the Sunday question, especially after the reissuing of the *Book of Sports*, was still prominent. In 1640 Mr. Pierce looked to Parliament for two reforms—the abolition of the Council's sessions on Sunday afternoons, and of plays on Sunday evenings.¹ On week days, too, the disorderly influence of plays was still felt. In 1636 the Mayor of Canterbury reported to Laud that certain players had acted there to the great disturbance of the city—causing drunkenness in the late evening hours, and a dastardly crime by one of the players, "whereof daily complaints came to the writer."² He had ordered them to desist, and one had flatly refused. The Council, albeit the King had sanctioned the performance, praised the mayor for his vigilance, and bade him stop all plays during Lent. In this significant bit of testimony we see the whole controversy in miniature—the disorders in the theater and the city, the crimes of the actors, the desecration of holy times, and the royal favor in opposition to the wishes of the people. Then notice in the growing opposition how the mayor and the Council dared to resist the King's license, and how constant and representative were the complaints made against the disorders of the players.

In this Puritanical feeling of the time Masson sees reason for the decay of theatrical interest in London during Charles' reign.³ To be sure, in 1637, or thereabout, theaters may have drawn good houses, especially since they were so often closed on account of the plague.⁴ The influence of *Histrion-Mastix* may have been even to send a certain class, which did not wish to be thought of Prynne's party, more often to the play-house; and undoubtedly *The Triumph of Peace* gave renewed vigor to the court mask. But on the other hand, Prynne's unwarranted punishment, and the very success of the mask, as well as the rapid rise in the intensity of party spirit in the last decade of the strife, tended to

¹ *State Papers*, 1640, p. 212.

² *Ibid.*, 321, 334, 354.

³ *Milton*, I, 499.

⁴ Collier, II, 86.

increase, far more than other influences did to diminish, hostility to the stage.

It was therefore in accordance with public desire that in 1642 the strongly Puritan Parliament ordered the total suppression of all stage-plays. This order was the voice of Puritan sentiment, yet other things lent their influence to make suppression easier. During the five preceding years, especially in 1636, the plague had closed the theaters for long periods, and somewhat prepared the way for the final measure. Then, since Parliament had good reason to fear the actors, who sided almost to a man with the other party, self-defense alone would have prompted the action. And even from those who enjoyed the drama, less disapproval was to be expected than in England's happier days. Compared with the great questions of civil and religious liberty for which the Puritans were battling, the stage question had shrunk to small importance. The chroniclers of these years, Baker and others, say almost nothing of the theaters and their assailants. Yet however great these side-influences were, it was essentially the old-time Puritan spirit, grown deep and universal, that supported the order:¹ "Whereas public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the others being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity: it is therefore thought fitt and ordained by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, that while these sad causes and set-times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne."

It must not be supposed, however, that play lovers were to give up their amusement, and authors their livelihood, without protest. In October, 1647, and again in February, 1648, this order had to be renewed. In the meantime, the actors, who now occupied the seat of the humble, complained of cheerless days, or mockingly petitioned an inexorable

¹ *English Drama and Stage* reprints the three acts of Parliament, from which we quote in part the first.

Parliament for redress. In 1641 appeared *The Stage-Players Complaint. In a pleasant Dialogue betweene Cane of the Fortune and Reed of the Friers. Deploring their sad and solitary conditions for want of Employment*.¹ One of the complainants had no hope for better days, "For Monopolers are downe, Projectors are downe, the High Commission Court is downe, the Starre-Chamber is downe, & (some think) Bishops will downe, and why should we then that are farre inferior to any of those not justly feare, least we should be downe too." But the other, more sanguine, thought plays so necessary to persons of quality as an honest recreation, and to the ignorant as an instruction, that they could not be dispensed with; and both joined in the prayer from their "letany," "From Plague, Pestilence and Famine, from Battell, Murder, and suddaine Death: Good Lord deliver us."

In 1643 there appeared a satirical poem offering certain propositions for Parliament's consideration, and ridiculing "King Pym" and his Parliament's "soaring Plots" and "strange Votes," and promising to reform if favored once more. A pamphlet of the same year, entitled *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, in a more serious spirit made similar promises. In it the actors protested that they had purged their comedies of all evil jests; that they had perfected themselves in the art of acting; and that if allowed to play once more they would reform the abuses of the play-houses and the scandal of their own lives, and would ridicule no longer things or persons sacred. But we have passed by the point to which we have been advancing, and need only glance at these new petitions from the other side. In promising to reform, actors virtually admitted the validity of the charges long urged by the Puritans; and thus at the end we see again that the public opinion that led up to Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*, and that culminated in the Long Parliament's orders of closure, had been both just and persuasive.

¹ This and the other tracts here mentioned reprinted in *English Drama and Stage*.

CHAPTER 17.

CONCLUSION.

/ With the year 1642 ends the Puritan attack on the stage. Preparatory to investigating the course of its development, we looked to antiquity and to the early days of Christianity for a display of similar hostility. There we found what was essentially a Puritan demonstration of feeling, when the desire to satisfy Christian ideals of truth and purity led to distrust and abhorrence of the ancient art. Similar though the spirit was to that of England, it of course had its differences. The Church Fathers had idolatry as well as worldliness and immorality to fear in the pagan games—a dread which was real to no large body of Englishmen. Naturally, therefore, the Fathers were less ready to recognize a well-trod stage. That the Roman plays were morally worse than the English was little realized by the Puritan, to whom the English drama stood as the acme of all evil; nor indeed was there a vital distinction in the fact. In both countries attack was inspired by the same vices. Yet in spite of these differences, the spirit of the Fathers and of the Puritans was essentially the same. Great Romans like Cicero and Horace, though despising the actor and his craft, cared not enough for morality to sacrifice art to it. It was the Christian spirit that gave up everything to attain the one great end of life, and in this, Plato, the Fathers and the men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were one.

To support their cause in its immaturity, and to express the debt which they owed to the early churchmen, the English Puritans sought to rest their crusade on the old. That, however, did not prevent their cause from taking on a definitely English color. The needs of the agrarian population and the overcrowding of London roused feeling against wandering actors till they became rogues and vagabonds in

the eyes of the law and of society. At the other extreme, also, the extravagance of the gentlemen and ladies created an aversion against ruffs and Spanish hose that played no small part in the movement. The plague, too, the dreaded scourge of the day, and the consequent fear of crowded assemblies, gave great impetus to the feeling. All these influences were felt by the solid middle classes of English society, which was deeply Christian, so that the movement became more popular in its character and leadership than the earlier movement had been. For the middle class in England had influence and power, and cared to use it. Again, the stage controversy soon allied itself with the other quarrels of the time; and the feeling aroused elsewhere, especially when actors came to give back the insults which they received, rushed the question to its conclusion. To offset these reasons for an irresistible march of the Puritan cause, there was the vital fact that in the early days of Shakspeare and Marlowe there was art of the highest order on the English stage, whereas in Rome naught but the dregs of art survived. Therefore many Christians were ready to put up with the evils in England, and never joined the Puritan faction till the theater was rapidly on the wane, and till they saw the necessity for a sacrifice of pleasure. But there was almost no other condition which did not add its impetus to oppose rather than to aid the English stage.

The growth of this quarrel we have endeavored to trace from the time when a genuinely sincere and conscious realization of the evil of the miracle-play first arose. To be sure, it has been impossible to mark off any absolutely defined steps in its progress. We have seen that the attendance at the theaters signifies but little in regard to their status in the community. Even the laws themselves do not serve as definite milestones. The question of Sabbath desecration, for example, which earliest roused solid opposition even in the actors' own party, was in spite of all orders, early and late, never wholly settled. The author of the *Third Blast* said that in spite of almost universal resistance

Sunday plays still continued in 1582. In 1591 the Council itself complained of disregard of its orders on this matter; in 1599 Rainoldes uttered the same complaint; and even after the laws of James and Charles, we have found Crashaw in 1607, Prynne in 1633, and lastly Pierce in 1640 still protesting against the violation of the Sabbath by stage-plays. This will illustrate the danger of trying to mark the growth of opposition by reference to definite laws. It was a steady development among the middle classes especially, rising therefore by gradual incline rather than by steps. Yet we feel that we have traced this gradual rise with certainty. Sunday plays may often have been given; but Henslowe's *Diary*, by its intermissions every seventh day, shows that in the later period they were not common, at least at the public places. We have indicated the increase in the intensity of the attack, both in literature and in the pulpit, an intensity that spread steadily and even rapidly throughout the country. And this development, we hope, has been marked by clearly defined, but not arbitrarily chosen, periods.

It has been our endeavor to show from what a widespread opposition the orders of 1642 culminated. One may almost hesitate to call it a Puritan demonstration. For a large share of the movement came, as we have seen, from men whose aim was purely social, and in the early days, and occasionally in even the later periods, from ministers high in the Episcopal church—Babington, Hall and Andrewes. Nevertheless, we call it a Puritan attack, because its main strength came from men who formed, or were enrolled in, the genuine Puritan body, and because the parties eventually divided quite evenly on the question. Bacon, for example, though he regarded masks and triumphs as toys wasteful of time, nevertheless allowed princes their pleasure, and marked no deficiency in dramatic poetry.¹ One of the leaders in the church of that time, John Donne, while reminding his hearers that God was present even in their amusements—music, mirth, drink, comedies, and “other

¹ *Masques and Triumphs. Advancement of Learning, Book II.*

outward comforts," added, "Not that such recreations are unlawful: the mind hath her physic as well as the body."¹

We need hardly mention in this connection Donne's poem in praise of Jonson, which reminds us in turn of Crashaw's poem on Ford's two tragedies. Still higher in the church came these sentiments. We have heard Laud say that there might be good in true comedy. He himself had arranged court entertainments, and from his patronage of the poet Cartwright one might assume that his ideas of good and bad in the drama were rather vague.² There were certainly many men of the Episcopal church like Herbert, lovers of purity in life; but because on other questions they were so far sundered from their opponents, they cared not to espouse the Puritan cause. Therefore it was left at the last for the practical, every-day character of Puritan Christianity to fight the abuses of the drama.

Of whom, then, was this Puritan party composed? It contained men from all walks of life. Many, undoubtedly, were possessed of no culture. But were there not just as many of the actors' party destitute of this high and rare trait, who appreciated nothing but the allurements of the theater? Another class of Puritans, smaller perhaps, was composed of ideal characters like Colonel Hutchinson, who, though gifted with a love of music and culture and a fondness for rural sport, felt the call of life so strongly that he sacrificed, with no loss, be it noted, in the fineness and richness of his character, its pleasures for its stricter purpose. In even loftier natures we find the same tendency. Though the poet Spenser never renounced the drama, he at least censured its degradation; and the poet Milton represented the highest phases of the Puritan movement. With him our survey may fittingly end.

It is unnecessary to expound the depth of Milton's scholarship, his love of Greek tragedy and the harmony of his poetic soul. In early life he confessed in *L'Allegro* and

¹ *Sermons*, II, 378.

² Laud, *Diary*, p. 196. See also chapter 15, p. 175.

Il Penseroso his fondness for the delights of both tragedy and comedy. And during his temporary absence from Cambridge in 1625 and 1626, when the quarrel was far advanced, he wrote to a friend concerning his recreations in London,¹

Excipit hinc fessum sinuosi pompa theatri,
Et vocat ad plausus garrula scena suos.

He must refer here to attendance at the public theaters. To be sure, the plays which he describes are classical in nature; but this may have been due to school-boy pedantry, or to the feeling that a description of an English play in Latin verse would be a serious anachronism. At least no one can doubt that he attended the theater. But as the purpose of his life deepened, and as his outlook matured, his approval, if not his love, of the drama lessened. He never lost all faith in its worth. In outlining the ideal course of a boy's education, he provided for the introduction, though late, and "with wariness and good antidote," for a study of the best tragedies and comedies of Greece, Rome and even Italy.² He allowed this because he believed that it could be made a "wholesome" exercise to elevate the mind. But even at the university, as he sat at plays sanctioned by the "reverend prelates," the high ideals of the minister's calling that were later voiced in *Lycidas*, made him revolt against the younger clergy's participation in the vileness of those plays.³ In later life, consequently, consciousness of the corruption which youth imbibed from the "writings and interludes of libidinous and ignorant poetasters" grew upon him,⁴ and his convictions deepened.

Milton, however, saw the good of poetry, and even at the end was confident that by a proper exercise of authority the magistrates could render the theater a means both of recreation and instruction—a supplement to the pulpit. He

¹ *Elegia Prima, Ad Diodatum*, lines 27 et seq.

² *On Education*, III, 472-4. Written in 1644.

³ *An Apology for Smectymnuus*, III, 114. Pub. 1642.

⁴ *Reason for Church Government*, 1641, Book II, vol. II, p. 480.

himself had been inspired to higher things by writings which others held vicious, and therefore, even amid the immorality of the Restoration stage, he did not hesitate to dress his thoughts once more in dramatic form, as he had already done in *Comus*, and to affirm his belief that tragedy was "the gravest, moralest and most profitable of all other poems."

But though Milton never lost faith in his ideal drama, he, like many other Puritans, was probably so disgusted with the last feeble attempts of the English stage that he welcomed the forcible closure of 1642. Reform had been proved impossible. In Peele's time there was an effort, as has been seen, to rid the stage of its immorality; the *Play of Plays* promised, and all defenders wished, such purification. But to accomplish it was a task for Hercules, as Gosson said, and no Hercules appeared. Instead of amendment came only darker days; and those who held the Puritan ideals of life saw no remedy but total suppression of the dramatic art.



PART II
THE DRAMATISTS' REPLY TO THE PURITANS

CHAPTER 1.

THE ACTORS AND THE MARTINISTS.

In the face of Puritan opposition the actors had not always shown the extreme humility and readiness to please that is revealed in the petitions of their days of want. It was an age of give and take, and recognizing, as they did, in Puritanism the bitter foe of their art, dramatists and players alike joined in a fierce counter-attack on their enemies. Every stage, said Mrs. Hutchinson, belched forth its jests against them; and, undaunted by the growing opposition, its devotees threw back insult against argument, and scoffing in answer to serious reproof. For the attack and counter-attack were in nature diametrically opposed. The Puritans carried on their opposition, on the whole, in a very creditable spirit; their motive was serious, and though they may have gone to the extreme, and though some, undoubtedly, were far too intolerant, their main position was fair and just. This can not be said of the actors' reply. Their words, whatever were their convictions, were of course not serious. There were certain points of the Puritan character which were legitimate objects of ridicule, and which all at the present day find amusing. But unfortunately the actors went too far; making no attempt to understand Puritan ideals of life, they exaggerated grossly the actually existing foibles, and foisted the vices of the few black sheep upon the class. This was the characteristic spirit of the age in its private, political and even religious controversies, and it is not surprising that it marred the side of the question now under consideration.

Undoubtedly the stage saw its foe in the early days of the public theater; it had, perhaps, even a deeper bred hostility to Puritanism than a mere spirit of retaliation; yet for several reasons it did not take the initiative. In the repertoire of the newly secularized drama, humour comedy was un-

known. Then, since the early objections brought against the drama were not particularly combative in tendency, and attracted probably less notice than those that followed, attack may have seemed to the players somewhat uncalled for. Furthermore, the lines of the controversy had not yet been drawn to coincide with those of the greater religious questions of the day. The greatest patrons of the early theater, Leicester and Essex, were themselves of the Puritan party, and out of respect for them their protégés may have kept silent. The early attack, moreover, came from those so high in the English church that it would have been rash to withstand them. For from the days of Henry VIII all meddling with affairs of religion and state was strictly prohibited from the stage. All these reasons kept the players from beginning the quarrel, or from accepting at once the gauntlet of their enemies.

In making this statement, however, it should be borne in mind that a play was never given just as the author wrote it. The comic part, especially, of the old plays was largely left to the inspiration of the clowns on the boards, who improvised whatever suited their fancy, and as much as the audiences were willing to stand. Shakspeare made two complaints against such usurpation by clowns of too great prominence in the action; and a similar complaint by Brome in the closing days of the drama shows how the custom prevailed through the whole period.¹ It is fair, therefore, to assume that although a certain sense of dignity, and a determination not to lose court favor restrained the dramatists from noticing the first criticisms of their opponents, many a clown, who saw his way clear, gave a sly dig at the scruples of the growing Puritan party.

One such bit of rebuttal from the early clowns has been preserved in Tarleton's *Jigge of a horse loade of Fooles*, which was written before 1588.² There, as is supposed, that famous clown introduced a number of puppets to the audi-

¹ Brome, *Antipodes*, II, 2.

² Tarleton's *Jests*, ed. Halliwell, pp. xx-xxi.

ence, and among them a Puritan, whom he, playing with the name of Stephen Gosson, the author of the *School of Abuse*, called "Goose son," and whom he thus described:

Squaking, gibbering of everie degree ;
A most notorious pied balde foole,
For sure a hippocrite ;
Of a verie numerous familie.

Only a few years later, evidence of even more extended satire of the class was betrayed in Nashe's assertion that a certain set of men objected to poetry through fear lest, after their death, they would not "be brought vpon the stage for any goodnes, but in a merriment of the Vsurer and the Diuel, or buying armes of the Herald."¹ Since in later comedies, Puritans were gulled and ridiculed in this very way, we conclude that dramatic satire turned to them earlier than extant literature would indicate. Yet since the authors of early attacks on the stage do not seem to be smarting so keenly under the lash of the actors as do later reformers, we can scarcely infer that their efforts received much attention from their opponents.

It was not long, however, before a controversy arose which widened greatly the breach between the two factions of the church. In the late months of 1588, the unseen and unknown Martin Mar-Prelate, as he called himself, began his attack on the unlawful exercise by bishops of their temporal power. His little *Epistle* called forth from both sides many tracts, whose only point of similarity was the extreme scurrility and venom of their spirit. It may be that the ecclesiastical authorities, smarting under this scathing ridicule of scurrilous old Martin, thought that no more suitable reply could be given their hidden foe than by opening the sluice-gates of theatrical ribaldry against him; and it may be that they made known their desires to the London companies. Or, if not quite that, it certainly had then become sufficiently clear from what quarter of the church opposition to the drama was to come; indeed, Martin

¹ *Pierce Penilesse*, 1592, II, 88-92.

himself expressed his hostility to the stage, and the actors may have presumed enough on their own authority to join the church party against the common enemy.

There can be no doubt that the stage entered willingly and even zealously into the warfare; but, though one or two anti-Martinist plays still exist, here again we can get only indirectly a sense of the acrimony of its contribution to the defense. For the authorities, whether or not at the start they had favored this mode of retaliation, were frightened at their ally's zeal, and as soon as possible reinforced, with new proclamations and more stringent provisions for a board of licensers, the old restrictive measures against the stage.¹ The vigor of these plays, however, may be surmised from several tracts written in 1589. Some believe the words of *Hay Any Work for Cooper*, "Yea and he saw martins picture drawn when he was a yong man,"² to refer to the caricatures of him on the stage. In *Martins Months Mind* Nashe wrote, "these Iigges and Rimes, haue nipt the father [Martin] in the head & kild him cleane, seeing that hee is ouertaken in his owne foolerie"; and then added, in defense of his craft, that the players against whom Martin's sons were fretting most were his superiors in wit, honesty and all other respects, and that the Martinists, who had played the fools without license, were by law the real rogues.³ This attack on Martin was made by clowns, but according to the marginal note, every player made a jest of him, till whipped and beaten, wormed and lanced, he knew not whither to flee. The same thought Nashe repeated in *A Counter Cuffe to Martin Junior*, where again he apparently referred to a play in ridicule of Martin.⁴ At any rate, such a play is described at length in *The Returne of the renowned Cavaliero Pasquille of England*.⁵ Lyly, also, in *Pappe with an Hatchet* had in mind at least a similar piece

¹ See Part I, chap. 10, p. 119.

² *Hay Any Work for Cooper*, *Puritan Discipline Tracts*, p. 74.

³ p. 166, Grossart's edit. See also *Death and Buriall of Martin Marprelate*, p. 173.

⁴ p. 77.

⁵ Huth Lib'y. edit., p. 123.

when he said of Martin, "He shall not bee brought in as whilom he was, and yet verie well, with a cocks combe, an apes face, a wolfs bellie, cats clawes, &." Even the prices of this entertainment are subjoined in a way to suggest the places where Martin suffered attack: "If it be shewed at Paules, it will cost you foure pence: at the Theater two pence: at Saint Thomas a Watrings [the near-by place of execution] nothing."¹ So clear is the reflection here given of the virulence of these plays that one can understand why Edmund Tylney, the Master of Revels, through the Privy Council and the London Corporation entirely suppressed them. The same officials brought to a close the Harvey-Nashe wrangle, and ordered their books to be burned; and it was quite possible for them to quell effectually this more important controversy, even though in the Liberties the stage was far from the law's reach. Thus an end was brought to the stage's participation in the quarrel, and Lyly continued his regret, "Would those Comedies might be allowed to be plaid that are pend, and then I am sure he would be decyphered, and so perhaps discouraged." Some asserted that this had already been accomplished, as we read: "There bee that affirme, the rimers and stage-players, to haue cleane putte you out of countenance."² Martin and his sons were not so easily discouraged, if truth must be told; but the actors' acrimony in the controversy is proved beyond a doubt by this indirect testimony of the participants.

In the same way, a glimpse can be had of the part played by Kemp, the great clown, in those jigs mentioned by Nashe. Nothing is to be inferred because a certain man of that name is included in *Theses Martinianae* as one of the seven "haggling and prophane" partisans of the bishops.³ For, if trust is to be placed in Kemp's assertion that his *Nine Daies Wonder*, in 1600, was the first work which he had ever sent to press, he can not be believed to have written

¹ *Pappe with an Hatchet*, p. 32.

² *Martin Junior's Epilogue*.

³ *Theses Martinianae*; near end.

against Martin in 1589.¹ It is probable that the Kemp there mentioned was William Kemp, the schoolmaster.² We may be sure, notwithstanding, that Kemp, the clown, participated in the attack, from Nashe's entreaty, "with the credit of thy clownery, protect thy Cutbert from Carpers,"³ an appeal which the fun-loving clown would never have disregarded nor forgotten in Martin Mar-Prelate times.

In addition to this indirect evidence in regard to Kemp's participation in the controversy, it is known that he acted in one of the two Martinist plays, which, owing no doubt to their comparative mildness, escaped the order of suppression. That play, *A Merry Knack to Know a Knave*, written perhaps by Munday, and printed about the year 1594,⁴ is a survival of the old moralities in its sole allegorical character, Honesty, who, serving as the connecting link between the different episodes, discloses the villainy of one after another of the four wicked sons of the Bailiff of Hexham. One of them, the priest, following his father's advice, has learned with his "pureness" to blind the eyes of his parishioners to his wickedness. Accordingly, he is widely known both for his scruples—"Fie, not an oath we swear for twenty pound," and for his godly exhortations, whose merit he disclaims with mock humility—"Ay, brother, the Spirit did move me thereunto." A student of the later drama at once recognizes these as badges of the dramatized Puritan. And when Sir John thus describes his vocation:

Thus preach we still unto our brethren,
Though in our heart we never mean the thing :
Thus do we blind the world with holiness,
And so by that are termed pure Precisians;

and when Honesty arraigns him as "John the Precise" for his hypocrisy and his fondness for taverns to the neglect

¹ *Camden Soc. Reprint*, p. 19.

² See *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.*, under Kemp.

³ *Almond for a Parrat*, Dedication, p. 6.

⁴ Dodsley, VI, see pages 517, 519, 580.

of his pulpit, we see still more plainly the satire of the play, which Will Kemp's "applauded Merrimentes," so highly commended in the old edition, made still more pointed.

In this attack, apart from its historical import, there is nothing either clever or interesting. It bears further witness to Kemp's share in the dispute; and, if Munday wrote the play, we find a partial explanation of Nashe's warning: "Beware Anthony Munday be not euen with you for calling him Iudas, and lay open your false carding to the stage of all mens scorne."¹ But some eight or nine years after the active controversy was closed appeared a late reflection of the Martin Mar-Prelate question, *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, in which we see that the actors had not forgotten their old foes, and that in the closing years of the century the names of its leaders were still available as a fund for popular amusement.² In that curious play, as Philomusus and Studioso are on their road to the sacred mount, they overtake the laggard Stupido. That extreme Puritan, as he clearly is intended, fearful lest his pure thoughts be contaminated, has left his companions in their City of Destruction, and has gone off by himself seeking the company of the godly at some pure exercise. He tries to dissuade the eager pilgrims from the quest, urging that his good uncle, "that never wore capp nor surples in his life, nor anie suche popishe ornament," has warned him against the vain arts of rhetoric, poetry and philosophy, as devoid of any "sounde edifying knowledg." "Why," he exclaimed, "they are more vaine than a paire of organs or a morrice daunce." These were all Puritan scruples. But Stupido is also a Martinist. He advises them to "sell all these books, and by a good Martin, and twoo or three hundreth of chatechismes of Jeneva's printe, and I warrant you will have learning enoughe. Mr. Martin and other good men tooke this course." For the poets he abhors, with all the fervor of good old Stubbes, for their wicked ruffs and breeches, that "make a zelous professor's harte bleed for grife." "Mr. Wigg-

¹ *An Almond for a Parrot*, p. 52.

² Act III, pp. 11-13.

ton and Mr. Penorie," on whose authority he rests his conviction, "never wore such profane hose, but such plaine apparel as I doe." The allusion is to two of the Martinists—John Penry, who was commonly believed to be Martin himself, and Giles Wigginton, a noted and to Whitgift troublesome divine, cited with the rest before the High Commission at Lambeth for supposed complicity in the Martinist tracts. Here, then, is a last reflection of this famous controversy, coupled with ridicule of the genuine Puritan aversion to vain arts and extravagant dress, which by the close of the century had become so common.

This anti-Puritan, Martinist play, therefore, is important historically; but in itself it should interest us. Though a survival of a bitter and vile war of words, its spirit is fair, not rancorous; its satire is pleasant, not founded on unjust charges of hypocrisy and vice against the party as a whole. It bears witness, nevertheless, to the popularity of the suppressed plays, of whose vehemence Nashe's exulting boasts are fully corroborated by Gabriel Harvey, who acknowledged, that with their "wittie flowtes, and learned Ierkes; enough to lash any man out-of countenance,"¹ and with their "publique reputation," one did well to fear the dramatist, and might more safely "anger an hundred other, than two such."

This gives all that we know definitely of the actors' share in the Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy, that perversion of the dramatic art present in Spenser's mind, when, in the *Teares of the Muses*, Melpomene laments that the high mission of tragedy has been debased by the folly of man, and when Thalia mourns that true comedy has fallen to a state where, "rolling in rymes of shamelesse ribaudrie," it delights in "scoffing scurrilitie" and "scornfull Follie." But the tracts written by Nashe and his fellows—for the dramatists replied in this medium also, show their opinion

¹ *Pierces Supererogation*, 1593; Harvey's Works, II, p. 212-214. On p. 216, Harvey refers to the anomaly of dramatists turned zealous churchmen.

of the Puritan position. Lyly saw the evil of putting religion in a fool's coat, as he expressed it,¹ but unfortunately he, with his comrades, felt that ribald jests were all that their scoffing opponent deserved. Consequently, if Martin stooped to foul abuse, their press also could turn out stuff salable "at the signe of the crab tree cudgell in thwack-coate lane."² This course was universally approved. Cooper, the theologian, was not one whit more reverent or decent than Martin; and Laneham, the theatrical manager, advised:³

Leave apes to dogs to bait, their skins to crows,
And let old Lanam lash him with his rimes.

Some of these tracts, however, give a more serious reply to the arguments of their opponents. *The Returne of Pasquille*, for example, ridicules the Puritan preachers that "leape into the Pulpit with a Pitchfork, to teach men, before they haue either learning, iudgment, or wit enough to teach boyes";⁴ while *An Almond for a Parrat* derides the appearance of the cobbler ministers, and laughs at the zealous preacher who wore out three hundred pulpits "with the vnreasonable bousing of his fistes."⁵ Such points in the Puritan character were open to ridicule, and to serious criticism also, and playwrights of a later date took full advantage of them. At this time, Nashe spoke still more seriously. He mentioned the disturbances caused in family and state by religious discord, referring to his own time when "the Preachers of England begin to strike and agree like the Clocks of England, that neuer meete iumpe on a point together."⁶ He objected to the Puritan habit, as he saw it, of construing the Bible to suit one's own convictions, and the "prophecyings," where, "according to their

¹ *Pappe with an Hatchet*, p. 39.

² *Ibid.*, title page.

³ *Whip for an Ape*.

⁴ p. 94.

⁵ *Almond for a Parrat*, p. 36, 39. See also *Pappe with an Hatchet*, p. 27: "What a braue state of the Church . . . to see one in a motlie Ierkin and an apron to reade the first lesson."

⁶ *Returne of Pasquille*, p. III.

custom of measuring gods mouth by their own,"¹ the ignorant artificers attempted in turn to expound the Scripture lesson. Such ignorance, the author thought, was largely responsible for the schisms. A minor cause was the Puritan greed for gold. The anti-Martinists commonly regarded their opponents as hypocrites, following really some such base motive,² who were ready to proclaim with the Cambridge zealot, "I neither respect oath, statute, nor conscience, but only the glory of God." However extreme this may sound, Nashe undoubtedly regarded the Puritans as men who questioned recognized authority in all walks of life.³ With this view, so commonly held by men of his type, and with the tendency of the day to scurrilous pamphlet warfare, it is not strange that the followers of the drama should have played the part they did in the Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy, making of Martin not merely a "may-game" for the stage, but meeting him with his own weapons. And although slight traces are visible of dramatic satire against the Puritan before 1589, the Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy gave the first real opportunity for the pen of the playwright.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

² *Almond for a Parrat*, p. 24.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 42-4.

CHAPTER 2.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DRAMATISTS' REPLY.

After the Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy had been quelled, the attack on the Puritans, as far as our evidence indicates, began again but slowly. The Martinists were the extremists of the party, regarded with suspicion and disfavor by the more conservative Dissenters, who till the closing years of the century were not marked off in habits, manners or conversation from ordinary godly men. Their demeanor was more grave, and their view of life more serious than that of others, but these alone offered no room for just ridicule such as had been heaped on Martin.¹ The actors, moreover, fearful of offending again, were careful at first not to speak too boldly, and the reappearance of the quarrel, therefore, in regular dramatic literature was mild in spirit.

The definite allusions of this mild quality in the early plays are exemplified in Lyly's *The Woman in the Moone*,² and in *Mucedorus*, where mere mention of the word is all that appears in the written copy.³ At times more notice was taken of their manners of life, but in a way really complimentary to them. For example, in another play of the same period one of the characters who will "swear, drink ale, kiss a wench, go to mass, eat fish all Lent, . . . shrive me of my old sins afore Easter, and begin new before Whitsuntide," called himself in consequence "no Puritan, but of the old church."⁴ A Puritan could not object to be excluded from that class of men, even though for his preciseness he suffered ridicule. Nor could one have taken as a serious insult Chapman's *An Humorous Days Mirth*, where a Puritan woman, the wife of Labernele, is given

¹ Marsden, *Early Puritans*, p. 243-45.

² Printed 1597. ³ Dodsley, VII, 208.

⁴ *First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, IV, 3.

a prominent part in the action.¹ She first appears troubled in conscience because she has dressed more warmly than health requires; it was vanity at first to put on the superfluous clothing, and to remove it will be to waste time ordained for better use. Thus does "one sin draw another quickly," she sighs. She has further scruples against poetry, and shudders to hear the vain salutation "my ladyship"; and all superstitious belief in fairies and their kin she sees disillusionized in the newly revealed "true, pure light." These were just the points which later satirists were constantly harping on; but the significant thing here is that the Puritan woman is given no worse character. She suffers herself to be tempted by Lemot, for she has been persuaded that in no other way can she prove her virtue; but in the end, with perhaps an unchristian pride in the extraordinary strength of her purity, she returns unchanged to her former secluded life. There is no hint of any vicious trait in her character; her precise way of living and her absurd little scruples, undoubtedly common to many women of the day, alone were ridiculed by Chapman.

This is one characteristic type of the Puritan as he was brought upon the stage in these years. Undoubtedly, the magistrates, who had proved themselves the enemies of the players, met their share of attention on the boards. We have seen how the theaters were several times censured for handling matters concerning the city fathers,² and there were probably many complaints like that from Cambridge, that the students in their plays and revels were misusing the free burgesses of the city.³ During Elizabeth's reign, however, dramatists dared not meddle with political matters unless sure, as Dekker was,⁴ that their satire would please. Consequently, their ridicule was at first slight, and more often than not left entirely to the inspiration of the clowns. Such restraint being placed on their freedom of speech, and with so little inspiration given them by

¹ Especially, pp. 54-60.

² See Part I, chap. 10, p. 120.

³ *State Papers*, 1601, p. 34.

⁴ In the *Whore of Babylon*.

Puritan character itself, the mildness of the reappearance of the dissension on the stage is sufficiently explained.

In this spirit, however, a change was soon to come. The repulse given to Puritan hopes at the Hampton Court Conference; the more depraved state of the new court itself; and the King's own hatred of Puritan principles, had a two-fold effect. It developed rapidly the Puritan character in peculiarity and oddity, and gave great freedom to players to use this growing character as they saw fit. The result was that in the first years of the new century literature devoted more attention to the Puritan party, and did its best to ridicule for its scruples, and to make odious for its supposed vices, the men, and particularly the women, of the Puritan persuasion.

We have seen how passing allusion could be made to the Puritans and their preciseness with hardly any feeling of censure conveyed. But these allusions were often used in an offensive manner. When Dekker's heroine, for example, calls another an ungodly Puritanical creature, the circumstances would make the use an affront to the Puritan.¹ Dekker sinned often in this same way. Once it was the Devil himself who was said to appear in the form of a Puritan;² a common association of ideas to Elizabethan dramatists,³ which, as used by Middleton, "Do you call us devils? You shall find us puritans," has all the strength of a threat.⁴ Even more offensive was the application of the word Puritan, Precisian, or the corresponding adjectives to the most degraded mortals.⁵ The frequency of such insults to the Puritan character made any reference to it on the stage objectionable, even the notice taken of the Puritanical coyness of Mayberry's wife,⁶ or the words of Field, "Precise and learned Princ Cox."⁷ In one play are

¹ *Honest Whore*, II, 1.

² *Westward Ho*, p. 310.

³ *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, I, 1; *Match Me in London*, II, p. 161.

⁴ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, IV, 3.

⁵ *Malcontent*, V, 2; *Isle of Gulls*, III, 1; *Westward Ho*, p. 292, 307.

⁶ *Northward Ho*, p. 1.

⁷ *Amends for Ladies*, III, 3.

found seven such passages,¹ and throughout the whole period of our drama these passing allusions to the Puritans² or Precisians,³ as they were often called, even though in themselves but slightly tinged with sarcasm, and even though often complimentary to the Puritan character, would bring up associations that would anger any one at all in sympathy with the class, and would delight the godless, who saw in it the bitterest foe to their amusements. In consequence, early Puritanism, though characterized by nothing but dignity and extreme sobriety, was exhibited in scorn for the gratification of its enemies.

The dramatists, however, did not confine themselves to these passing allusions. If they early laughed at the seriousness of the Puritan's temper, they gladly seized on the oddities that grew up gradually in his habits of life and manners toward the end of the Queen's reign, and which, becoming more and more pronounced as years went on, were of course legitimate subjects for comedies of character and manners. The main stronghold of Puritanism lay in the middle classes of London society. It was the class of honest, industrious, sober-lived people among whom hostility to the stage had spread so rapidly, and from whom those magistrates were elected who had fought the playhouse so bitterly. For these persons, the actors felt no particular love. Jonson especially liked to slur the city fathers. In the final scene of *Every Man in his Humour*, Justice Clement defended poetry from the disparagement of Knowwell, urging that poets were not born every year as

¹ *Westward Ho*, pp. 292, 292, 299, 307, 310, 335, 345.

² *Greene's Tu Quoque*, I, p. 192; *All Fools*, Prologue; *Northward Ho*, III, 1; *Match Me in London*, II, 161; *Roaring Girl*, p. 186; *If This be not a Good Play*, p. 316; *Merry Devil of Edmonton*, Dodsley, p. 217; *Blurt*, IV, 1, V, 2; *More Dissemblers besides Women*, II, 3; *The Wits*, V, 1.

³ *Malcontent*, V, 2; *Renegado*, I, 3; *Gamester*, III, 1; *City Wit*, II, 1, V, 1; *English Moor*, V, 3; *Devil's Law Case*, II, 3; *Family of Love*, III, 3; *Hey for Honesty*, I, 1; *News from Plymouth*, V, p. 185; *Duchess of Malfi*, II, 3; *Atheist's Tragedy*, II, 4.

aldermen were, and that more went to the making of a good poet than of a sheriff; and, when Kitley with resentment stood up for the merchant class, again asserted boldly that he would honor a good poet more than the Lord Mayor himself. In the companion play,¹ and in other contemporary works, more contemptuous allusions are found.² As time went on, their bitterness heightened. We read that in 1639 a player said on the stage, "The alderman is a base, drunken, sottish knave"; and, after repeating the words, applied the remark personally, "I mean alderman (William Abel), the blacksmith in Holborn."³ Since the authorities did their best to silence such plays, they are, accordingly, more seldom found. But it was this class, the city merchants and their wives, whom the dramatists liked to deride and gull.⁴

The play which treats of this bourgeois class most pleasantly is *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Being only an amusing representation of the class from which Puritanism sprang, it can hardly be called a satire.⁵ In it, as the Citizen's wife is helped to the stage, she significantly remarks, "I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before"; nor was she ever more than half assured that her favorite apprentice would not be "inveigled by some of these paltry players." She had evidently been influenced by Puritan teaching, though not sufficiently to keep her from the theater. Hence, when Beaumont and Fletcher represent her exceedingly unconventional actions there, and her realistic appreciation of the play, they may possibly be laughing at the ingenuousness of a backsliding Puritan. Certain other Puritan tendencies were exhibited by Nell. She objected to "stinking tobacco," a common trait with the Puritan; she thought the curtain decorations of "Ralphe and Lucrece," as her husband interpreted them, to be "the Confutation of

¹ *Every Man out of his Humour*, I, 1; II, 1.

² *Cynthia's Revels*, I, 1; *Malcontent*, V, 3; *Bird in the Cage*, I, 1.

³ In *The Whore New Vamped*, *State Papers*, 1639, p. 529-30.

⁴ See, for example, Dekker's city plays.

⁵ See II, 4; I, 3.

St. Paul"; and, after her tiff with her husband, she said apologetically, "You know we are all frail and full of infirmities"—a travesty perhaps of Puritan discourse. This can hardly be called a satire of Puritanism; but when we remember that citizens as well as apprentices joined in damning the play, we may believe that its sarcasm was felt by persons not far removed from the subjects of our study.

In many other plays the city classes were ridiculed, but nowhere so cleverly as in Beaumont and Fletcher. The anonymous play, *The Puritan, or, Widow of Watling Street*,¹ gives a picture of the home of Widow Plus, whose late husband had acquired wealth by grasping means, yet was always very punctilious in the religious duties of his household, rushing down stairs often only half dressed that family prayers might not be late, and ever in his place at church, for, as the irreverent Pyeboard said, "he seemed all church, and his conscience was as hard as the pulpit." In memory of such a husband it was, that Widow Plus had vowed never to remarry, and her daughter Frances had taken a similar oath. Mary, the youngest, revolted, saying, "where I spend one tear for a dead father, I could give twenty kisses for a quick husband," and accordingly she plotted an elopement with a rich countryman. Her brother, too, showed the same filial reverence in his sigh of relief, "Farewell, old Dad, farewell! I'll be curbed in no more," as he felt free to yield to the sinful allurements of that wicked pastime, tennis. But with the exception of these black sheep, the family, with its servants, was strongly Puritan. It was this family that Pyeboard, the knavish scholar, set out to gull. He had heard their matrimonial plans discussed, and, while memory was still fresh, by an apparent power of divination divulged them—to Mary's infinite vexation. He pretended, also, to call in the evil one to aid in finding the gold chain which he himself had hidden. By these evidences of supernatural power, he and his friend so

¹ Written possibly by Middleton; printed 1607. See especially, II, 1; I, 1.

allured the widow and her elder daughter that they were about to forget their vows and yield to the proffered suitors, when the timely intervention of a nobleman, and his disclosure of the roguery, saved them. This is not the most biting part of the play's satire of the Puritans. We have omitted the endearing epithets, "Puritanicall scrape-shoes," "flesh o' Good Fridays," "church-peeling," "holy-paring," "religious outside," and so on; we shall have occasion to return to the hypocrisy of the holy family, as it is represented; but the portion of the plot above outlined serves to show how at an early date the Puritan families on the stage were ignominiously humbled by sharpers of all kinds.

Such general ridicule, however, of middle class London life is the smallest part of the subject under consideration. The dramatists scrutinized carefully the habits and manners of the Precisians, and each little peculiarity, either common to all, or only occasional, was carefully magnified for public exhibition. As the sect, if such it can be called, was first marked by gravity and serious attention to duty, it was for this first satirized. Their sobriety appeared incomprehensible to the players, and to the gayer set of Englishmen. We have already recalled one extended representation of their serious conduct; and in the early days of Dekker and Jonson the references multiplied. Already the gloom had settled on their countenances. In *Cynthia's Revels* is the dialogue:¹

What a set face the gentlewoman has, as she were still
going to a sacrifice!

O, she is the extraction of a dozen of Puritans, for a
look.

The same serious demeanor is mentioned by Dekker and Day; and, in the preface to the first edition of *Troilus and Cressida*, their general deportment receives comment.²

Another peculiarity of manner which the Puritans apparently adopted at this time, if one is to believe the players,

¹ IV, I.

² *Westward Ho*, p. 299; *Law Tricks*, V, p. 86; *Blurt*, V, 2.

was a habitual nasal twang,¹ which, with the pious manner of turning up devoutly the whites of the eyes,² became to many an essential feature of precisianism. Such behavior seemed an unwarranted subversion of nature to the opposition, and, especially to independent Jonson, a conscious affection. As one of his characters expressed it:³

It is precisianism to alter that
With austere judgment, that is given by nature.

At best such deportment was interpreted by the critics as Pharisaical ostentation, and at worst as the veil assumed by hypocrisy.

In addition to their personal gravity, the Puritans, who aimed at Biblical simplicity of life, felt a justifiable aversion to the gay attire and the absurd fashions of the day—the big breeches or “slops,” the poked ruffs, and so on. Many were the witticisms which this exhibition of common sense called forth from the other party.⁴ As Valentine’s rivals heartlessly strip him of his calling attire, he at last defies them:⁵

These breeches are mine own,
Purchas’d and paid for without your compassion,
And Christian breeches, founded in Black-Friars,
And so I will maintain ’em.

The Puritans’ plain garments and close-cut hair met with ridicule. Similarly, their abstention from popular fads set them apart from men. They looked on smoking as a sin, whether commonly because the Puritan type of nose, like the “Ase of Clubs” as Chapman described it,⁶ made the use of tobacco as uncomfortable for all the brethren as it was for his hot-livered little weaver, we do not know; but the

¹ *The Case is Altered*, I, 2; *Alchemist*, III, 2; *Covent Garden*, II, 2; *English Moor*, V, 3.

² *Family of Love*, III, 3; Cooke, *How a Man*, etc., III, 3.

³ *Case is Altered*, II, 3.

⁴ *Tu Quoque*, I, p. 192; *How a Man*, III, 3; *Wit without Money*, II, 4; *Family of Love*, I, 3; *Hey for Honesty*, IV, 1; *The Wits*, III, 2; *News from Plymouth*, V, p. 184, etc., mention this aversion.

⁵ *Wit without Money*, III, 4.

⁶ *Monsieur D'Olive*, II, 1.

prejudice, at all events, was often remembered.¹ More strangely, as it now seems, their aversion to profanity was often noted; but profanity, too, in those days was a fad, and a necessary part of a man's education. "He's no precisian, that I'm certain of, . . . I have heard him swear," said Kately no more frankly than many others.² So in reproving the use of oaths or in commenting on "Sunday oaths," as Fletcher called them, the dramatists intended mockery of Puritan scruples.³ The coyness of women in regard to jests drew like attention.⁴ It was their precise ways which especially roused the derision of the stage, and which served as a source of unfailing humor for the actors' reply.

Another trait of the English Puritan to be most frequently satirized was what may be called their religious demonstrativeness. Many an Englishman who had no sympathy with the vices of the age saw no reason why the Christian of that day should make his belief more manifest in his demeanor or conversation than old-time church people had done. To such, many of the little scruples already noted seemed useless marks of conscience. They were impressed, consequently, by the conspicuous belief in the Bible evinced by the Puritans in their baptism, who discarded the time-honored English names, and christened their sons and daughters with descriptive epithets and strange sounding Hebrew words, which, if Mr. Shandy's philosophy was sound, might reasonably be expected to blast their future careers. Such persons would enjoy the many travesties popularized by the dramatists—Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, Win-the-Fight Littlewit, Tribulation Wholesome, Ananias and Abigail. These were all a common source of amusement to a large class of people; and Cartwright's song:⁵

¹ *Dutch Courtesan*, III, 3; *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, I, 3.

² *Every Man in his Humour*, III, 2; *If this be not a good Play*, p. 316.

³ *If this be not a good Play*, p. 316; *Mock Marriage*, V, 3; *Fair Maid of the Exchange*, p. 60; *Woman's Prize*, II, 2.

⁴ Chapman, *All Fool's*, Prologue.

⁵ *The Ordinary*, IV, 1.

My name's not Tribulation.
 Nor holy Ananias :
 I was baptiz'd in fashion,
 Our vicar did hold bias,

was without doubt readily appreciated. These names became one of the marks of Precisianism; "I have Aminadabs and Abrahams to my godsons" said one in self-commendation;¹ and undoubtedly many agreed with Jonson that the names Tribulation, Restraint, Long Patience, and the like, were "affected only for glory, and to catch the ear of the disciple."²

Just as absurd seemed the Puritans' phraseology appropriated from the Scriptures, and their involved figures of speech and flights of rhetoric. *The Muses' Looking Glass* gives some choice specimens of this form of satire; the mock Puritan in *Amends for Ladies* roughly parodies it: "Most frequently, madam, unworthy vessel that I am to partake or retain any of the delicious dew that is there distilled."³ But quotations elsewhere given will exemplify sufficiently this form of humor. Similarly, their method of addressing one another, the terms brother and sister, zealous professor, true light, and so on, all became an important part of the dramatists' stock in trade. One who reads at all in the sermons or religious literature of the time notices at once how deeply the Puritan mind was impregnated with Hebrew phrase and feeling. It came of their close and reverent reading of the Scriptures; and, however excessive at times, the peculiarity of style, even in those writers not usually classed as literary, is strong and dignified. The dramatists, however, were as oblivious to the cause as they were deaf to the charm of the trait, and they saw nothing but folly in this outward demonstration of religious faith.

There are two plays of the later drama which picture the demonstrativeness of the Puritan's temper as carried into affairs of real life, and, it may be worth noting, both were

¹ *Family of Love*, III, 3; *The Parson's Wedding*, p. 385. •

² *Alchemist*, III, 2.

³ *Amends for Ladies*, III, 3.

written by prominent churchmen. In one of them, *The Ordinary*, by Cartwright, Sir Christopher, the curate, is a caricature of the Puritan. His talk is of unhallowed idols and his own holy cause, one whom his fellows call "cushion-thumper" and "good Israel Inspiration," and whose later career they thus depict:¹

I shall live to see thee
Stand in a play-house door with thy long box,
Thy half-crown library, and cry small books.
Buy a good godly sermon, gentlemen—
A judgment shown upon a knot of drunkards :
A pill to purge out popery : The life
And death of Katharine Stubbs.

The caricature is not consistently maintained;² and the most characteristic feature of the play, to which we shall recur, is its reference to the Pilgrim Fathers. But it ridicules, also, the demonstrative zeal of the parson, and to this we call attention.

In the later play, *The City Match*, by Jasper Mayne, we find one of the most complete representations of militant Puritanism.³ There the young girl Susan, through the instruction of her Puritan preceptress, Mistress Scruple, had become a true member of the band. Under the name Dorcas she was serving in the play as maid to the upstart lady Aurelia, and the light within her was not let to shine unseen. Her precise ways, the holy "turn-up" of her eyes, her nasal twang, her sighs "an ell long," and her railing on discipline were so unceasing that Aurelia was distracted. She was weary of such talk, she complained. Never was she dressed without a sermon, and without being made to prove by text the lawfulness of curling-irons and fashions, and just when it was in primitive times that jewels were worn. So weary of it had she become that she vowed to her confidential adviser, the matrimonial agent, that she would rather do her own starching and ironing to the ruin of her hands than put up with it longer. She, however,

¹ III, 5.

² Kit speaks of the cobblers in the white surplice.

³ See I, 5; II, 1; II, 2; IV, 3.

was not the only one to suffer the affliction of the girl's unflagging zeal. One day when left in an outer room during a call, Dorcas turned to the parrot, since no human sinner was in sight, and so converted it that afterwards it spoke nothing but Knox's works. "So there's a parrot lost," Aurelia sighed in despair. And when even parrots failed her, Dorcas' light still shone among the vanities of her mistress's wardrobe:¹

She works religious petticoats ; for flowers
She'll make church-histories. Her needle doth
So sanctify my cushionets ; besides,
My smock-sleeves have such holy embroideries,
And are so learned, that I fear in time
All my apparel will be quoted by
Some pure instructor.

Yet in spite of Mistress Scruple's care in weaning Dorcas from the sins of the flesh ; in spite, too, of the pains Mr. Scruple had taken, working as earnestly for the girl as ever he had worked over a Tuesday lecture, Dorcas was only too glad at the first opportunity to lay aside the Scriptural name and holy garb, to forsake the congregation at St. Antlin's, and to become again plain Sue, and the bride of the gallant Plotwell.

This satire on the demonstrative, militant nature of Puritan religion is very clever, and in every respect pure and gentlemanly. It is in pleasing contrast to the usual scoffing at the vehemence of the ignorant parsons. Mayne made only one reference to the Geneva weavers and their black dress, who had left the loom for conscience' sake—a theme utilized by others for some of the bitterest and coarsest sarcasm.² The anti-Martinists mentioned them in their tracts. When even Massinger, whose moral purpose and respect for religious feeling were far higher than those of his fellows, spoke of the learned botcher and zealous cob-

¹ Undoubtedly a humorous exaggeration. Yet the same is mentioned by John Taylor. (See Fletcher's *Night Walker*, III, 4, n.)

Thus may a Brownists zealous ruffe in print,
Be turn'd to paper ; and a play writ in't.

² *City Match*, V, 1.

bler at Amsterdam,¹ there were naturally many such allusions from less moral dramatists. Day brought in a "most precise & illiterate expositor," representing him as open to bribery and viciousness.² The dramatists were equally fond of referring to the silenced ministers. In *The Silent Woman* Truewit exclaims, "Slight! get one of the silenced ministers: a zealous brother would torment him purely," to which parallels may be found in other plays.³ The players forgot that the silenced pastors were often the most learned and cultured men of the old church, who were forced to leave their pulpits, and regarded the less learned men who uprose as the highest type of the Puritan preacher.

If the dramatists felt no respect for the Puritan divine, their respect for the dissenters' service was no greater. Undoubtedly, the Puritans did introduce a mode of exhortation new both in style and form. Their method was to divide their discourse into two main parts, first, the "doctrine," or exposition of the text, and then its "use," or application, both of which separated logically into many branches, each in its own turn minutely divided. Jonson was fond of using this distinction, and in no very respectful way. For example, Needle says, "He hath begun three draughts of sack in doctrines, and four in uses";⁴ and even Ford, who has practically nothing to say against the Puritans, employs the word in this technical sense.⁵ The length of these sermons, also, did not escape attention. Even the words of the valorous lieutenant, when his friends were trying to drag him from the battle, "I am not come to the text yet," is probably an allusion to the endurance of the nonconforming divine.⁶ In form, delivery and bareness of surroundings these discourses seemed absurd to those used to form as well as to matter. Yet

¹ *The Renegado*, I, 1. ² *Ile of Guls*, III, 1.

³ *Silent Woman*, II, 4; also, *Covent Garden Weeded*, I, 1; *Hey for Honesty*, III, 3.

⁴ *Magnetic Lady*, III, 2; *Love Restored*; *Woman's Prize*, II, 6, mentions the "seven branches" of division in sermons.

⁵ *Perkin Warbeck*, IV, 3.

⁶ *Humorous Lieutenant*, III, 7.

in even stronger contrast with the dignity of the Established Church were the impromptu prayers of the Dissenters. One of these is described for us: "A pretty wooden sentence in a preamble to an exercise, where the reader prayed that men of his coat might grow up like cedars to make good wainscot in the House of Sincerity."¹ Why such strangely worded petitions should be preferred to the dignified forms of the Prayer Book, many besides the godless could not see. Bartholomew Fair ridicules this religious life in all its forms—the "dry grace" at meals, droned out while the meat on the board forgot that it had been that day in the kitchen, the disputes on predestination, the "sober drawn exhortation of six hours, whose better part was hum-ha-hum,"² and the prayers groaned out with a zeal so great that the petitioner's buttons would sometimes burst, or the spirit leave him entirely. It was this aspect of Puritan worship that seemed absurd to many Englishmen. It mattered not whether it was in sermon or prayer, in prophecy, as they called their prayer-meeting, or in the exercise, or over the Psalm Book, the irregular and democratic character of the "discipline" roused only the mirth of the opposite party.³

It happens, therefore, that all actors speak derisively of the devotional zeal of the Puritans. Many are the allusions to the noisy discussions at a Puritan lecture, where to "talke and make a noise" was believed to be the only lesson learned,⁴ and where all sorts of needless questions were debated. So the thoughtful Puritan was asked, "Come hither, what is hammering in your head now? Is't not some Synodical question to put unto the brethren, concern-

¹ *Family of Love*, III, 3. *The Woman's Prize*, III, 2, mentions a prayer conceived "out of the meditation of fat veal."

² Also *Alchemist*, III, 2; Brome notes the same intonation, *Covent Garden*, II, 2.

³ For these points see, *The Witty Fair One*, III, 4; *Mayor of Quinborough*, V, 1; *The Chances*, I, 5; *Wit without Money*, V, 1; *The Dutch Courtesan*, IV, 2; *Alchemist*, II, 1; *Silent Woman*, V, 1; *Duchess of Malfi*, IV, 2.

⁴ *Westward Ho*, p. 292.

ing Whitsonales and Maygames?"¹ For the schismatics were famous for their love of contention. Dekker mentions this fondness for controversy; and in a quarrel over money one of the combatants is told to maintain his point "stifly; as a Puritan does contention."² Such enthusiasm they could not account for. The vigorous gesticulation of the ministers has already been noted; and equally famous was the fervency of the laymen, particularly of the women, who, trusting to inspiration, ventured to expound the Scriptures and to exhort. One of the characters of the *Woman Hater* felt that "strained struggling" within him of prophetic desire.³ Such "sanctified zeal," as it was called, made the Puritan seem to the actor a crazed zealot.⁴ Don John in *The Chances*,⁵ as a final proof of the conjuror's powers over the Devil, asks:

Can he tie squibs in their tails, and fire the truth out?
Or make 'em eat a bawling Puritan,
Whose sanctified zeal shall rumble like an earthquake?

and the worst case in Dekker's madhouse is the Puritan.⁶ The women especially were represented as victims of the monomania. The gipsies of Jonson's mask pray that their sovereign may be untroubled by the disturbing noises of the day, and include in their petition immunity from "the loud pure wives of Banbury." Such a woman was Mistress Polish in *The Magnetic Lady*, who could dispute with doctors of divinity and the Spittle preachers, and "find out" the Arminians.⁷ Jonson gives as good a picture of the house ruled by such a woman as Dickens does in his *Pickwick Papers* of the nonconformist of the last century. With a precise wife, he says, "you must feast all the silenced brethren, once in three days; salute the sisters;

¹ *Covent Garden*, II, 2.

² *Roaring Girl*, p. 186. Also *Dutch Courtesan*, III, 1; *The Spanish Curate*, IV, 5.

³ *The Woman Hater*, III, 3; *The Wits*, IV, 2 (hoarse lecturers).

⁴ The adjective was common property; see *The Jovial Crew*, II, p. 371; *The Devil's Law Case*, I, 2.

⁵ V, 2.

⁶ *Honest Whore*, V, 2.

⁷ *Magnetic Lady*, I, 1.

entertain the whole family, or wood of them; and hear long-winded exercises, singings and chatechisings, which you are not given to, and yet must give for; to please the zealous matron your wife, who, for the holy cause, will cozen you over and above."¹ For such enthusiasts the dramatists could find no place on earth sufficiently secluded; and Dekker went even a step further. It was "an Arch-great Puritane" of his who entered the lower world with a burning zeal to consume the wicked and to chastise the foul fiend.² It was but a little soul, having been dwarfed with too much lively exercise of spirit upon earth, and crooked like those of his companions with never going upright; but Pluto feared to admit him and his holy band, lest granting them even once a foothold, his realm could never be delivered of the pest.

A new and milder form of ridicule of the practical and everyday nature of the Puritan's religion is introduced by the host in *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, who says to his fellow poacher in the dark of the night, "Smith, I see by thy eyes thou hast been reading a little Geneva print."³ These works of the Puritan divine, the dramatist, if from nothing but a spirit of retaliation, would not forget. Some of their titles are deservedly ridiculed. Such sentences as, "How well the sound can salve the sick man's grief,"⁴ are burlesques of that popular book of Becon, *The Sick Mans Salve*, read by penitent Quicksilver during his imprisonment,⁵ or of that equally attractive work by Perkins, *The Salve for a Sick Man*. Parodies of such titles were frequent. The wares cried out by the fallen parson, "the pill to purge out popery"; the *Physik for Fortune*, *Losenges of Sanctified Sincerity*; and the *One Hundred Godly Lessons*, are all cases in point.⁶ Often they were mentioned without parody, in the belief that the readers could supply

¹ *Silent Woman*, II, 1.

² *If this be not a good Play*, V, end.

³ p. 226.

⁴ *Dumb Knight*, III, 1.

⁵ *Eastward Ho*, V, 2.

⁶ See *Malcontent*, III, 1; *London Chanticleers*, sc. 3. See also *The Wits*, II, 3; IV, 1.

the mirth. Thus we read of Crowley's *School of Virtue*, of Robert Wisdom's *Translation of the Psalms*,¹ and of the religious works of Robert Greene, as well as of the divines, "Decalogue" Dod, Calvin, Knox, Marshall and Case.² In the mask on the Scots' entry into England in 1640, the poet asked whence came the spark then flying from Calvin's Geneva tinder-box, and with defiant humor answered:

If Knox were he that brought it first in play,
I see no help but knocks must end the fray.

Still better are the allusions to Fox and his famous *Book of Martyrs*. Cartwright describes the illustrations of the old editions,³

With a long label out o' your mouth, like those
In Fox's book, just like a juggler drawing
Riband out of his throat.

These attractive drawings may have been partly responsible for the household popularity of the *Martyrs*, which, we find implied, held its own place in English sitting rooms.⁴ The enormous popularity of such literature—we read Bayly's *Practice of Piety* in its 71st edition—Jonson could not understand. Twice he referred to Bayly's work. In the *Magnetic Lady* a character takes solemn oath upon it.⁵ And in the *Gipsies Metamorphosed* one of the wanderers filches it from the pocket of the straight-laced Christian. Conscientious search is made for the book, during which it becomes evident that its owner's grief is chiefly for the little ballad *Whoop Barnaby* which had been taken with it; and if such were his feelings, we need not be surprised that the deft-fingered gypsy should have thrown *The Practice of Piety* away in disgust.

It was not alone the absurdity of the titles of this class

¹ *The Elder Brother*, IV, 4; *The Ordinary*, III, 5; *News from Plymouth*, III, p. 155.

² Dod in the *Ordinary*; Calvin in the masque quoted in part in the *Hist. MSS. Com. App.* to 3rd Rep., p. 83; Knox in the *Ordinary*, IV, 5; the *City Match*, II, 2; the masque; Greene in *Mad Couple*, II, 1.

³ *Ordinary*, I, 3.

⁴ *Witty Fair One*, II, 1.

⁵ IV, 1.

of religious writing, nor its practical nature and comprehensive detail that attracted the satirists. It is remembered how frequently these books condemned theatrical performances and the profession of the actor, and to the players turn about seemed fair play. Those books, especially, which attacked the vices of the age were popular targets for the actors' shafts. George Wither's *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, which had attacked the stage, we find mentioned in plays.¹ Fletcher referred to a similar work, *The Myrroure for Magistrates*; nor was Stubbes forgotten by his many friends.² Brome mentions the extraordinary piety of Katherine Stubbes, of whose virtuous life Philip Stubbes had written; Cartwright noticed her as we have seen; and Cooke alludes to the story in *The Anatomie of Abuses* of the fastidious lady who had allowed the Devil to poke her ruff, when all maids had failed to suit her, and who was finally carried off by him as his own.

But of course Prynne and *Histrion-Mastix* received the largest part of such attention. Twice Beaumont and Fletcher advert to it,³ once by name, but the other time as

A book new printed against playing, dancing,
Masquing, May-poles; a zealous brother's book,
And full of fables.

Several such indirect allusions occur. One by Ford is to the contempt thrown on liberal studies "by such as dote on their own singularity,"⁴ and another by Carew, who describes the privileges of his Momus in a way applicable to Prynne.⁵ Dorcas, in the *City Match*, referred to the "book that suffer'd martyrdom"—for *Histrion-Mastix* had been publicly burned; and her mistress mentioned not it alone, but also the *News from Ipswich*, for which Prynne

¹ *A Jovial Crew*, toward end; *Muses' Looking Glass*, p. 40-1; *The cruel Brother*, II; *Time Vindicated*.

² *Night Walker*, III, 3; *Court Beggar*, III, 1; *The Ordinary*, III, 5; *Greene's Tu Quoque*, I, 92.

³ *Night Walker*, III, 4, 3.

⁴ *Love's Sacrifice*.

⁵ *Coelum Britannicum*, p. 196, Muses' Library Edition.

suffered his second pillorying.¹ At that time Burton stood with him, and twice he is associated with "Scribe Prynne," who suffered by a "just sentence of the Star-Chamber."² Shirley and Heywood made more extended references. Shirley dedicated *A Bird in a Cage* to Master William Prynne, beginning his mock address to the "inimitable Mecenas" with the words, "The fame of your candour and innocent love to learning, especially to that musical part of humane knowledge, Poetry, and in particular to that which concerns the stage and scene (yourself, as I hear, having lately written a Tragedy)." He then, in no very humane spirit, called attention to the appropriateness of his title, Prynne being in prison; and urged him to print all later discoveries in his "next book of Digressions." Heywood, who had almost nothing to say against the Puritans, three times felt called upon to reply to the calumniator of the art that he had so sturdily defended.³ And very significantly, it was once in a play which deals with a theme wholly unfit for either comedy or tragedy. The third time his words are interesting, because at the end of the address to Sir Henry Appleton he expressed the hope that before the next term he would be able to pen another apology for poetry in answer to its great opponent. He had nothing new, however, to say for the drama, and the personal nature of this reply would have detracted from the merit of his earlier *Apology*. These answers to Prynne are characterized by a seriousness of tone that contrasts significantly with the bantering hostility of other references; the temper of Prynne's book, and the punishment that it brought him, had made clear to all the gravity of the situation, as the later days of the great controversy in church and state drew near.

This whole tendency to a more conscientious ordering of

¹ *City Match*, II, 1, 2; III, 3.

² *Magnetic Lady*, I, 1; III, 4; *Hey for Honesty*, IV, 1; *Sad Shepherd*, I, 2.

³ *A Prologue spoken to their Sacred Magesties, at Hampton Court; A Maiden-Head Well Lost, To the Reader; The English Traveller, Address to Sir Henry Appleton.*

life, and a more careful attention to the duties of a Christian, was the result of the Puritans' belief in the intimacy of man's relations with God. They were grave and earnest, because they regarded the ideal life to have been such; they were zealous, because they believed so thoroughly that the time for regeneration had come; their sermons were minute and comprehensive, because they sought to avoid temptation in all its forms, and unadorned with ceremonies, because they regarded material things as obstacles in the communion of the soul with God. For the Puritan there were but two main categories—right and wrong; and the latitude left to personal inclination in "things indifferent," as they were called, constantly diminished as first one, then another of the open questions was placed in the firmly defined class of things wrong. The appearance and behavior of the Puritans was marked, as we have seen, by their scruples against many little things then held essential in dress and manners. As time went on, their austerity increased. This development of character is exemplified in the lives of Milton and Colonel Hutchinson. The latter was a country gentleman gifted by nature with a love of music and a zest for country games. But as the seriousness of life grew upon him, one after another of its pleasures yielded to a sense of duty; the joy of life in its buoyant fulness was gone. A similar development in both the life and the writing of the great Puritan poet is known to all. The opposing party, however, even those of it who must have had misgivings in regard to the conduct of the age, failed to see why things not radically wrong should be set aside by the Puritan; and of course people connected with the theaters, who cared less than many others for propriety, saw nothing in the spirit but a target for their scorn.

The growth of these Puritan scruples is well illustrated by the increase of sentiment against the forms of the Episcopal church. "In things indifferent I am tractable," lightly remarked one of Massinger's characters, thinking probably of these prejudices.¹ Vestments had been held a

¹ *City Madam*, V, 3.

thing indifferent by the divines who first drew away from the old ceremonies. But in later years the repugnance deepened, till the Dissenters were supposed to regard "a man in a surplesse to be the ghost of Heresy,"¹ and till even this comparison passed current, "H' has turned his stomach, for all the world like a Puritan's at the sight of the surplice."² Similarly, their objection to church organs, those "Babylonian bag-pipes," cathedral bells, the Prayer Book with its rubric, or to anything connected with the bishops, became conspicuous.³ Their extreme antipathy to fast days and Lenten observance could then be stated as a prejudice:⁴

That allows us to eat flesh,
In Lent, though it be rotten, rather than be
Thought superstitious.

When we remember what the Puritans were forced to endure, and how church ceremonies developed steadily toward conformity with the usages of England's old enemy, the Church of Rome, such growth of Puritan abhorrence of Episcopacy appears only logical.

The English communion, however, never received the full measure of hatred bestowed by the Puritan upon the Romish ceremonies; and especially after the court inclined to Catholicism, stage ridicule of this hatred became common. Scarcely had the irate father called to young Gabriel, "What do you gape and shake the head at there," when sorrowful recollections of his son's religious bent prompted the answer, "I'll lay my life he has spied the little Crosse upon the new Church yond, and is at defiance with it."⁵ Nor was he far astray; Gabriel was gazing in horror at a

¹ *Fine Companion*, I, 4.

² *Match at Midnight*, I, p. 14.

³ *Bird in a Cage*, Dedication; *Fine Companion*, I, 4; *Spanish Curate*, IV, 5; *Bartholomew Fair*; *The Alchemist*, III, 2; *Family of Love*, III, 3; *Muses' Looking Glass*, II, 3; *Hey for Honesty*, III, 3; *Ordinary*, I, 1; also *Family of Love*, III, 3; IV, 1. ✓

⁴ *Renegado*, I, 1; also, *Family of Love*, III, 3; *Ordinary*, IV, 5; *The Puritan*, see above.

⁵ *Covent Garden Weeded*, I, 1; also, *Ile of Guls*, III, 1 (Romish things in general); *The Parson's Wedding*, I, 3; *Humour out of Breath*, III, 3.

young girl decked out in all the sinful splendor of an "idolatrous painted image." The use even of the symbol of the cross in church ceremonies was strictly avoided as a relic of popery. This we see reflected in the scruples of the Puritan gossips, who, on meeting at the mother's bedside, express the hope that the christening is to be done without idolatry or superstition, "after the pure manner of Amsterdam."¹ Playwrights also noted the similar feeling toward the ring;² and the aversion to the word "mass," so deep that even the word Christmas was banned, and all sorts of synonyms—"Christ-tide," "nativity pie"—substituted. This, undoubtedly, is only slightly exaggerated; but the strokes of the cartoonist are easily recognizable where the zealous Rabbi at the Fair "with sanctified noise" assails and overthrows the "apocryphal wares" of the gingerbread woman, her "basket of popery, nest of images, and whole legend of gingerwork."³ More delicately Randolph caricatures a hatred of Rome so bitter that Samaritanism was abhorred—"good works are merely popish and apocryphal," and so uncompromising that even virtue itself was severely scrutinized, lest a cardinal virtue should unwittingly be harbored:

Cardinal-virtues,
Next to pope-virtues, are most impious,
Bishop-virtues are unwarrantable.⁴

For at mention of the pope, the Puritan on the stage gaped in horror.⁵

Much of this sort of ridicule is really absurd, and dramatists seem to have been more within their province in dealing with the Puritan scruples against pastimes and sports. Zeal-of-the-Land Busy had been a baker by trade, but had given it up because his cakes were used at May-games, mor-

¹ *Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, III, 2.

² *Bartholomew Fair*; *Ordinary*, IV, 5.

³ See *Hey for Hontsty*, III, 3, for an imitation of this satire of Jonson.

⁴ *Muses' Looking Glass*, I, 1, IV, 1; also *The Ordinary*, III, 5; IV, 5.

⁵ *Bird in a Cage*, IV, 1.

rices, marriage feasts and other sinful festivities. This is a reflection of the dramatists' real feelings. In all seriousness Jonson assured the Puritan lecturers that they need not cast to their hearers¹

Scrupulous bones ;
As whether a Christian may hawk or hunt.

Fletcher was greatly impressed with this part of their doctrine. He humorously described the rallying of the female neighbors in support of husband-beleaguered Maria as rash enough to venture to raise even a May-pole "against the sovereign peace of Puritans."² For to him the Puritans were³

Stubborn, precise puppies
That turn all useful and allow'd contentments
To scabs and scruples—hang 'em, capon-worshippers.

Naturally the Stuart sovereigns' *Declaration of Lawful Sports* and the opposition it aroused figure somewhat in the plays. There was young Gabriel in *Covent Garden Weeded*, who, with the "brethren of the separation," "had nothing but hang'd the head . . . ever since Holiday sports were cried up in the Countrey."⁴ Of course the Puritan objection to bear-baiting and stage-plays was often spoken of. England was no longer merry England to the theatrical party; and when Shorthose and Humphrey are torn away from their city friends and pleasures by the whim of their mistress, the worst curse that they invoke upon her, as the horses are turned toward her country home, is that the journey may be cold and cheerless, devoid of all joys, no, "not a fiddle" left, "but all preach'd down with puritans."⁵

The Puritan opinion of bear-baiting is most happily pictured by Brome in that strange play *The Antipodes*.⁶ Its

¹ *The Alchemist*, III, 2.

² *Woman's Prize*, II, 4. Also, *News from Plymouth*, V, pp. 185, 196.

³ *Wild Goose Chase*, I, 2; *Spanish Curate*, III, 2.

⁴ *Covent Garden Weeded*, I, 1; *The Ordinary*, I, 1.

⁵ *Wit without Money*, III, 1; also *The Puritan*, I, 1 (aversion to tennis); *Covent Garden*, II, 2 (May-games); *Muses' Looking Glass*.

⁶ IV, 1.

hero, Peregrine, as a result of a boyish passion for Mandeville and other veracious annalists, can think of nothing more present or practical than Prester John and Cathay. To cure him, the physician pretends to be a great traveler, and promises to conduct the youth to the longed-for Antipodes, where, he says, the natives speak and look just like Englishmen, but behave in ways exactly opposite to theirs. Then Peregrine is put to sleep. When he awakes, after a tedious voyage, as he is made to believe, to the Antipodes, the stage prepared by the doctor is ready, on which the actors are to play the parts of the men beneath London. Peregrine is delighted with the queer behavior of the supposed citizens. He is particularly astonished when an old woman feebly advances spelling out, as best her dim eyes will permit, an advertisement of that royal pastime, bear-baiting, and the coming match between the tanners and the butchers. As she reads, a girl to all appearances thoroughly English, hears her and rebukes the folly of age:

Fie Granny fie, can no perswasions,
Threatnings, no blowes prevaile, but you'll persist
In these prophane and Diabolicall courses,
To follow Bear baitings, when you can scarce
Spell out their Bills with spectacles?

But the grandmother has outlived the sober days of her maidenhood, the time has come for her to sow her wild oats, and though her eyes are dim, she refuses to abandon the pastime as long as she can see the sport, or even while the noise and scent of combat can reach her.

This is amusing ridicule of the sober-going English people who abhorred the Bear Garden and its sport. The same play preserves something of the dramatic warfare. In the Antipodes, of course, the players are Puritans, and "among the sober sisterhood" have learned to speak "demurely"; and the city magistrates there love poetry as thoroughly as London aldermen loved custard. Like Nell, in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Peregrine's mother has never before seen a play. She enjoys it greatly and interrupts the actors

constantly, while her husband sits by her side fearful lest she learn vice or fall in love with one of the actors—just the mistrust of the stage felt by real Puritans.

In many other places the same Puritan aversion is mentioned. Middleton once deplored the uncertainty and hazard of the actors' calling, since they knew not "when to play, for fearful fools [an allusion to the closing of the theaters in plague time]; where to play, for puritan fools; nor what to play, for critical fools."¹ The unknown author, also, of the preface of the first edition of *Troilus and Cressida* wrote, 'Were but the vaine names of commedies changed for the titles of commodities, or of playes for pleas, you should see all those grand censors, that now stile them such vanities, flock to them for the maine grace of their gravities.' The aversion, however, to which Cartwright, Fletcher and Brome allude was not a question of mere nomenclature. Webster came closer to the truth, when, as I think, he adverts to the Puritan detestation of the lascivious language of plays.² After taking her oath in court, the maid, fearing lest her testimony may "spoil the youth o' th' office," asks to be questioned in Latin, "for the cause is very foul." The allusion is slight, but a recognition, I think, of one of the main arguments of the opponents of the drama.

These are all more or less quiet, though not serious, allusions to the discussion then in progress. The scruple is openly scoffed at in other comedies in which Puritans themselves appear to speak their minds. In the *Puritan* one of the servants is asked to become an actor in Pyeboard's conspiracy, and he exclaims: "An actor? O no; that's a player: and our parson rails against players mightily, I can tell you, because they brought him drunk upon the stage once."³ The favorite incident of this kind was to have

¹ *A Mad World*, V, 1.

² Fletcher, *Womans Prize*, III, 2; Cartwright, *Ordinary*, III, 5; Brome, *A City Wit* ("What is it some Heathenish Play"), V, 1; Webster, *The Devils Law Case*, IV, 2; *The Alchemist*, III, 2; *The Wits*, IV, 2.

³ *The Puritan*, I, 4.

one of the godly band brought by some hook or crook to the play-house, where he forthwith became so pleased with the entertainment that he vowed to abandon his silly scruple. This episode is cleverly worked out by Randolph as we shall soon see. In Middleton's *Mayor of Quinborough*, "Oliver, the Puritan" happens in a house where a play is to be given.¹ When the "profane trumpet" sounds, he covers his eyes, and when forced to look, exclaims:

For rebels there are many deaths ; but sure the only way
To execute a puritan, is seeing of a play.
O, I shall swoond.

He does no such thing, however ; instead, he enjoys it all so keenly that his final verdict is, "I was never better pleased at an exercise."

Jonson gives a still more humiliating instance of a similar fall from grace. After Dame Purecraft had wooed, with her confessedly ill-gotten wealth, and won the heart of the heaven-sent husband—the gamester Quarlous ; after Justice Overdo had been soundly cudged for his Puritan tendencies and set in the stocks, the great leader Rabbi Busy met his fall. Freed from the humiliation of the stocks he had rushed undaunted into the puppet-show with the war-cry, "Down with Dagon ! down with Dagon ! 'tis I, I will no longer endure your profanations," firmly resolved to remove that "exceeding great beam" of the "stage-players, rimers, and morris-dancers, who have walked hand in hand, in contempt of the brethren, and the cause." The players, however, being loath to yield without a fight, set one of the puppets to confute the reformer. In the ensuing debate, though Busy called to heaven, "assist me zeal, fill me, fill me, that is, make me full," one after another of his arguments was overthrown. The puppet showed that he had a calling, since Busy himself had called him Dionysius ; and a lawful calling at that, for Busy had professed his own to be lawful, and accordingly the puppet's must be, as

¹ V, 1. In *The Family of Love*, I, 3, Mistress Purge objects to plays because not allowed "in the prime church of Ephesus by the elders."

Dionysius twists it, since Busy had called him idol. Further mortification came as the debate proceeded. To the accusation of vanity brought against the Puritan feather-makers of Blackfriars, Busy could offer no plea. And at the end, he was completely humiliated with the overthrow of his great argument, when the puppet proved that since they had neither male nor female among them, the well-worn text from Deuteronomy had no validity. The Rabbi could make no answer, and sat down meekly to watch the play, which, if truth must be told against Dame Purecraft's kinsman, the author, was none too modest. Yet sturdy Zeal-of-the-Land was delighted.

This was the most humiliating picture ever given of such a defeat, and by the irreverent it must have been greeted with roars of laughter. Jonson, however, had possibly a deeper motive than derision. Selden, his later adviser, thought that the whole dispute had degenerated into a children's quarrel of, it is so, it is not so, it is profane, it is not profane; and the dramatist by this ridiculous contention, in which the lie is even passed between the oddly matched disputants, may have sought to shame the real participants into a more creditable form of argument. Later, Jonson referred to the Puritan argument more soberly. Gossip Mirth informed her companions that objection had been made to plays because they had devils in them, and because they taught women to outwit their husbands; and she herself hoped that Zeal-of-the-Land Busy and his colleague, Rabbi Troubletruth, would see to it that boys set to school to learn Latin would waste no more time in learning plays, "to the super-vexation of town and country."¹ This is more serious notice of his opponents, yet even this is a reminder of the earlier uproarious burlesque.

As we are here considering the actors' opinions concerning the Puritan opposition to the drama, it is relevant to note a more dignified answer to them. Massinger's tragedy,

¹ *Staple of News*, III, 2. In *Alchemist*, III, 2, he advises the Puritans not to rail against plays to please the aldermen. ✓

The Roman Actor, is unique in that its hero, Paris, is one of the profession. With evident reference to certain aspects of English feeling, his fellows complain of the unprosperous days that have come, when men given in private to the vilest dissipation in public spurn the player. And Paris, as if in vindication, explains their purpose: "Our aim is glory, and to leave our names to after time." In the course of the action the company is arrested for traducing persons of rank and meddling in the affairs of state. It falls to Paris to deliver in court a noble defense of plays. Afterwards, as a practical test of his arguments, he attempts to transform, by a dramatic exposition of the folly of greed, an old man too miserly to "lose time to see an interlude." The noble demeanor of Paris, and his strong plea for his profession, persuade the judges. In this indirect reply to the Puritan position is Massinger's share in the famous controversy, for he had almost nothing else to say against the Puritans; and this contribution is in no wise inconsistent with his moral earnestness and belief in the power of religion.¹

These were the scruples for which the Puritans suffered ridicule. Thus far we can all have at least some sympathy with the actors. Certain points in the Puritans' conduct, and many of their little peculiarities could be made the legitimate subjects of humour study; and even though we feel that the actors exaggerated too broadly, and though we sympathize at heart with Puritan ideals, we can nevertheless enjoy the players' representations. But in pandering largely to the classes least in sympathy with Puritanism, playwrights did not stop with the material actually furnished them. Undoubtedly, they could not appreciate "precisianism," but they need not, in consequence, have called all precise persons hypocrites. Undoubtedly, there were some evil men and women in the fold, but the actors, whose apologists had always begged that the profession be not burdened with the sins of its few delinquents, ought to have exhibited like consideration toward their enemies.

¹ See, I, 1; II, 1.

They ought also to have distinguished between the moderate nonconformists and the fanatics of various sects toward whom the Puritan felt as much abhorrence as the churchmen. They did none of these things, however, and their attack from now on, as we have arranged it, becomes unfair, if not disgusting, a direct deviation from the ideal of Jonsonian humour comedy—to sport with human follies, not with crimes.

Of course the natural divergence between Puritan principles and practice offers an unobjectionable source of fun to erring humanity. It is only when the Puritans are charged with serious failings or positive vice that real objection can be made. The best of this satire is contained in Randolph's *Muses' Looking Glass*. It was a favorite point against the Puritans, made by the puppet, we remember, to the discomfiture of Rabbi Busy, that in spite of all abhorrence of the vanities of life, especially in attire, a large body of the inhabitants of Puritan Blackfriars subsisted by the manufacture and sale of those ornamental feathers which Stubbes denounced as "fluttering sayles and fethered flags of defiance to vertue."¹ This is Randolph's starting point. The situation is made doubly sharp when he brings Bird, the Puritan feather-man, and Mistress Flowerdew, the notion-woman, to the play-house for their customers. The zealous sister entered with the horrified cry:

See, brother, how the wicked throng and crowd
To works of vanity! Not a nook or corner
In all this house of sin, this cave of filthiness,
This den of spiritual thieves, but it is stuff'd
Stuff'd, and stuff'd full, as is a cushion,
With the lewd reprobate.

Bird recalled how the actors were wont to ridicule their sect, and she, the words of their vicar, and the prayer of a brother against the play-house. Yet whatever twinges their

¹ *Anatomic of Abuses*, p. 51; *Westward Ho*, p. 345; *Wonder of a Kingdom*, I, 1; *Malcontent*, Induction; *Monsieur Thomas*, II, 3; *The Wedding*, II, 1; *Bartholomew Fair*; *Alchemist*, I, 1; *Gipsies Metamorphosed*.

consciences gave them for ministering to the vanities of the wicked place, they consoled themselves with the reflection :

'Tis fit that we, which are sincere professors,
Should gain by infidels.

So in spite of their protestations, Roscius, the actor, persuaded them even to take seats, where one might have overheard later some such conversation as this :¹

Bird. My indignation boileth like a pot—
 An over-heated pot—still, still it boileth ;
 It boileth, and it bubbleth with disdain.
Mrs. Fl. My spirit within me too fumeth, I say,
 Fumeth and steameth up, and runneth o'er,
 With holy wrath, at these delights of flesh.

For until Roscius had silenced the man given to scurrilous talk, they still thought the play-house a "foul sink," a "common shore of lewdness." By that act, however, the lawfulness of the pastime was revealed, and Flowerdew concluded :

Now verily I find the devout bee
May suck the honey of good doctrine thence,
And bear it to the hive of her pure family,
Whence the profane and irreligious spider
Gathers her impious venom.

And at the close, Bird expressed their firm resolve :

Hereafter I will visit comedies
And see them oft ; they are good exercises.

This reminds one strongly of other comedies in which Puritans were won from their scruples ; but the picture to bear away from this play is that of the zealots selling their vain wares to the assembled idlers, though horrified at the vanity and sin around them.

Jonson noted the same anomaly. In *Love Restored*, Plutus, as Cupid, had forbidden all masks for the time, to the disgust of Robin Goodfellow, who had undergone the greatest trouble to elude the vigilant doorkeepers that barred his entrance. As a last resource, he had even appeared as

¹ IV, 1.

a feather-maker of Blackfriars, thinking that in that garb admittance would certainly be granted him. But they only scoffed at him, asking how a Puritan could be engaged in so frivolous a vocation. His wits were with him, however, and the ready answer was, "we are all masquers sometimes"; and with that the doorman "knock'd Hypocrisy o' the pate, and made room for a bombard man."¹

The charge of hypocrisy is not always stated so bluntly as it is here, but is, of necessity, always implied in the frequent allusions to the Blackfriars feather-makers. So is it also in the references to the "pure laundresses" who starched the sinful ruffs for ladies of fashion. Jonson marked another instance of the same anomaly in the case of the Puritans of Coventry, who had once been engaged in the manufacture of blue thread.² But in this case, as Jonson explained it, business interests were sacrificed, though not purposely, to conscience. In their strictness the Puritans put down the Coventry games, never seeing till too late that with the decreased demand for blue thread to adorn the revelers' gowns, the industry of the town would be ruined.

The anomaly was often noticed in more important matters. [The Puritans, it was said, were more influenced by desire for gold and worldly power than they would have men believe.³ As guardians of the property of the fatherless and the widows they were represented as notoriously faithless to their trusts. Nor, in spite of their coldly spiritual life, were they free from gluttony and intemperance. All will remember that Zeal-of-the-Land Busy's appearance in Littlewit's sitting room, in spite of a sister's urgent call, was delayed by the more potent enticement of the cold turkey pie and the fragrant beverages in the cupboard. Fur-

¹ Jonson often spoke of Puritan hypocrisy, *Volpone*, I, antimasque; *The Devil is an Ass*, III, 1; *Every Man out of his Humour*, p. 6.

² *The Gipsies Metamorphosed*; *The Masque of Owls*.

³ Tribulation Wholesome in the *Alchemist*, and Dame Purecraft in *Bartholomew Fair* are illustrations; also *Blurt, Master-Constable*, IV, 1; *The Dutch Courtesan*, II, 3; *The Ile of Gulls*, III, 1.

ther reflections were cast on Puritan gluttony by the boy in Ursula's booth, who, on learning the religious tendencies of his guests, allowed only two to a pig in preparing for them, and plenty of ale at that.¹ The pictures of Puritan intemperance are even more abusive. In Middleton's *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* the two Puritan gossips, who come "in unity" priding themselves on their lowliness of spirit, partake so heartily of the husband's meat and drink that their talk becomes sadly fuddled.² Still worse is the picture in Brome's *Covent Garden Weeded*.³ There scrupulous young Gabriel, who abhors all places of riot, is accustomed in taverns, by roaring loudly, "even as the beast that belloweth," to shut off the sound of the revelers and their fiddles, sounds unparalleled in wickedness since the desolation of the great city. Once, however, his brother, the studious Templar, dragged him off to a London inn, Gabriel protesting vehemently all the way, "You promised and covenanted with me at the last house of noise and noisomenesse, that you would not lead me to any more Tavernes." But his brother persuaded him that several of his boon companions were of the Amsterdam band. "We are brethren, sir, and as sanctious as you," said one of them in justification, "though we differ in the Grounds; for you, sir, defie Orders, and so do we; you of the Church, we of the Civil Magistrate; many of us speak i' th' nose, as you do: you out of humility of spirit, we by the wantonnesse of the flesh; now in devotion we go beyond you, for you will not kneel to a ghostly father, and we do to a carnal Mystresse." The validity of these assertions poor Gabriel was already in no condition to judge; his head being by nature so full of "whimseys," as his brother explained, there was little room for further excitement, and under the ministrations of the supposed Amsterdam gentlewoman everything had grown so "whirley, whirley, whirley" that he supposed himself to be the victim of "Jesuitical fumes."

¹ For further satire on Puritan gluttony, see *The Malcontent*, V, 3; and *The Puritan*. ² III, 2. ³ II, 2; IV, 2.

If we can trust these caricatures, however, even such serious imperfections never worried the rightly trained Precisian. He had always some clever casuistry to make black seem white, and the worse the better reason. For example, in the *Puritan*,¹ the only obstacle in the way of realizing Pyeboard's stratagem to get Captain Idle out of jail is that the Puritanical servant, who alone can gain possession of the necessary gold chain, will not consent to steal. A happy thought in this emergency comes to Pyeboard. It would be robbing, not stealing, to get the chain by stealth from his master, and since "pure Nicholas Saint Antlings" sees the force of the distinction, the Captain soon regains his liberty.

In *The Alchemist*, it is remembered, Tribulation Whole-
some, the Amsterdam pastor, and his deacon, Ananias, come to Subtle's seeking aid for their church; for, as the pastor says, "we must bend unto all means, that may give furtherence to the holy cause." When Subtle suggests counterfeiting as the most available method of raising the needed revenue, they at first hesitate. But soon they see a distinction between that sinful act and the "casting" of money, and return to learn the opinion of the congregation. Unanimously that body decides that the matter is so "subject to construction," and gives full power to them to plot with the "locusts of the foul pit," as Ananias calls the Alchemist and his assistant. The humor of this situation is heightened by the scruples of the deacon; he scoffs at Greek learning, apparently because it is not Hebrew, he corrects Subtle carefully when he speaks of Christmas, and when bells and traditions are mentioned the irrepressible deacon loses all moderation in denouncing them as popish and detestable. Yet at the same time he and the pastor are plotting with the Alchemist for the casting of money.

These irregularities in character, and such readiness to excuse them, reveal the dramatists' conception of their foes. Hypocrisy was the main ingredient in their nature. The

¹ V, 4. For casuistry see *Family of Love*, IV, 2.

Puritans were "the smoothest and slickest knaves in a county."¹ Underneath their pious exterior lurked all sorts of crimes. Dame Purecraft described herself as an "assisting sister of the deacons, and a devourer, instead of a distributor of alms"; and the cheating propensities of the Rabbi she knew too well to think of him for a husband. So common was the charge of hypocrisy that "puritanically" became synonymous in slang phrase with "secretly" or "deceitfully." Most commonly lust was the hidden vice.² In Middleton's *Your Five Gallants*,³ one of the girls was as yet a novice in the ways of London courtezans; but her friends, she apologized, had always been Puritans, from whom she had learned to carry herself cunningly with all outward appearance of holiness, and the gallants desired no better recommendation. In another play, the evil mind of a Puritan woman is described, who in the street "cast up the white of her eye like a Puritane."⁴

It was only in this way that the irreverent could account for any show of holiness. We know that the recusants were not hypocrites, for in those days nonconformity meant, at the least, discomfort, and that their human weaknesses were emphasized to the utmost by the playwrights. The more brutal, therefore, of these portrayals of Puritan hypocrisy become disgusting. | Seldom is our sense of the injustice of the charge blinded by such light, fine satire as Win-the-Fight speaks in Bartholomew Fair. When she is about to enter her first fit of "longing" her husband advises her to loosen her lacing that it may be done more naturally; but she neatly responds, "No, I'll not make ready for it: I can be hypocrite enough, though I were never so straight-laced."⁵

Such satire is delicate enough to be enjoyable, even though we see the injustice of its intended application to

¹ *Eastward Ho*, II, 3; I, 1; *If this be not a good Play*, V, end.

² *Northward Ho*, III, 1; *Grateful Servant*, II, 1. ³ I, 1.

⁴ *Wonder of a Kingdom*, I, 1; also *Amends for Ladies*, II, 1 (for Lust); *Revenge's Tragedy*, II, 2. ⁵ I, 1.

the party as a whole. We know that Jonson fully believed what he wrote. But there was too little of such sincerity. The satire, especially when the charge of lust was made, was neither clever nor decent. It took little ability for a dramatist to associate Puritans with vicious persons, and to cast slurs on their morality, till the word Puritan seems to have become the cant term for whore.¹ Less frequent, fortunately, were the cleverer, but more offensive, stories told to illustrate the charge. An allusion in one of Cooke's plays to Puritan sobriety reminded a guest at the banquet of a funny experience which he had had.² He had once wooed a Puritan woman, but with no success; for always something about him repelled her—his double ruff, long hair, vain scarf, low hanging garments or Spanish shoes. At last he cut his hair, substituted a plain band for the ruff, and, looking like a porter, went to her with "holy speech"—"Peace be to this house, quoth I, and those within." Immediately her coyness disappeared; enraptured, she "turned up the white of eye," while casuistry made clear her way. The caricature here of Puritan scruples is not bad, and the verse reminds one somewhat of Butler; but the spirit of the accusation is entirely wrong.

This story was not exceptional. One even more scandalous was told by Killigrew of another Puritan woman; and Marston brought a man of Puritan tendencies on the stage to represent a similar yielding to temptation.³ But the most complete picture of sinful Puritanism was drawn by Middle-

¹ *Malcontent*, V, 2; also, *What You Will*, III, 3; *Ile of Guls*, IV, 3 (two references to Puritanical whores); Fletcher, *Fair Maid*, II, 3; *Amends for Ladies*, II, 1; *Northward Ho*, III, 1, etc.

² *How a Man*, etc., III, 3, date 1602.

³ Killigrew in *Parson's Wedding*, III, 5; Marston in *Dutch Courtesan*. There Malheureux has always preached against idleness and intemperance (I, 1); his friend seeing his threatened fall tries to bolster him up with the Puritan antidotes—"reason, discourses, meditations, discipline, divine ejaculatories, and all those aids against devils" (IV, 2). But to no avail. Most of the references to Anabaptists and the Familyists make the same charge.

ton in *The Family of Love*. Middleton classed the members of this sect with the ordinary Puritan. Mistress Purge was the scrupulous elder of the congregation in London, who spoke "pure devotion," and who shuddered at the "most detestable squeaking sound" of the word organ, even in its physiological sense. The wickedness of this woman, and the vice practised in their darkened meeting house were disclosed during the course of the play by two gallant suitors of Mistress Purge. For to prevail upon her they learned to "speak pitifully, look scurvily, and dissemble cunningly"; to renounce those heinous sins of theirs—the eating of fish on Fridays, and "speaking reverently of the clergy"; and to give up all recreation save on holy days. After this self-abnegation they were received with favor into the Family. But in spite of the secrecy of the meetings, Mistress Purge was at last found out. Then, in the face of unquestionable evidence, she assumed the air of the martyr, the lamb worried by the wolves, and, with the habitual temporizing tact of her sect, easily explained the whole case.¹ This is the most detailed picture of lust given on the stage. It concerns, to be sure, a sect not really Puritan, but one counted such by all dramatists. That Middleton so meant his for an anti-Puritan play is proved by the confession of one of the brethren. "You shall hear," he said, "how far I am entered in the right way already. First, I live in charity, and give small alms to such as be not of the right sect; I take under twenty i' th' hundred, nor no forfeiture of bonds unless the law tell my conscience I may do't; I set no pot o' a Sundays, but feed on cold meet dressed a' Saturdays; I keep no holydays nor fasts, but eat most flesh o' Fridays of all days i' the week; I do use to say inspired graces,

¹ For other such references to the sect see, *A Mad World*, I, 2; *Anything for a Quiet Life*, II, 1; *Witches of Lancashire*, III, p. 213; *Ile of Guls*, II, 1; *Court Beggar*, III, 1; *Dutch Courtesan*, III, 3; *Lady of Pleasure*, I, 1, where Shirley mentions Middleton's play, and pretends to think that he had been bribed not to reveal the full enormity of the sect.

able to starve a wicked man with length; I have Aminadabs and Abrahams to my godsons, and I chide them when they ask me blessing; and I do hate the red letter [of the prayer book] more than I follow the written verity."¹ In this passage, which is only an unusually witty variety of the common satire, we see that the dramatists made no distinction between them and the fanatical members of the Family of Love.

This completes our survey of the points on which the dramatists based their satire of the Puritans. We began with their light ridicule of Puritanical gravity and petty foibles, and passed on to representations of inconsistency and hypocrisy and to the unfairest charge of lust; for even that mystical sect, the Family of Love, as far as sure evidence goes, was not amenable to this charge.² But the treatment given the Puritans by Middleton may lead one to ask if the playwrights were always careful toward whom they directed their satire. Had Middleton ever read the sermon of honest old John Knewstubs, *A Confutation of the monstrous and horrible heresies taught by H. N. and embraced of a number, who call themselves the Familie of Love*, he would have known that the true Puritan abhorred the sect with more loathing than did even the pious actor. Middleton certainly must have known this, yet wilfully regarded it as a Puritan band. Jonson, also, noted the fact that the Dissenters were "still by the ears one with another," yet treated them as one.³ True Puritanism remained so long a matter of externals, becoming marked for peculiar doctrine only in James' reign, and never becoming notorious for vice, that the dramatists were glad to include in their satire the various more or less fanatical sects that arose, in order to lend spice to their ridicule of the party as a whole.

We have already seen how this was done with the Family of Love; and with the Anabaptists it was the same. The many flings at their honesty and virtue, beginning in the

¹ *Family of Love*, III, 3.

f ² Hunt, I, 235-7.

³ *Staple of News*, III, 1.

early years of the century, were aimed virtually at the whole Puritan body.¹ It was the chance mention of Fifth Monarchy men in the *Alchemist* which threw Doll into her fit. Equally great was the pest of the Anabaptists. On the moon, Jonson says, the "doppers" are to be found, but there they are treated as "lunatic persons . . . that have leave only to hum and ha, not daring to prophesy, or start up upon stools to raise doctrine."² On earth, however, they are permitted all those troublesome vagaries. A customer, described in the margin as a "dopper" or "she-baptist," enters the Staple of News to purchase six pennyworth of information about the saints at Amsterdam, and is promptly fitted out with that quantity of rumor concerning the coming advent of the prophet Baal in that city with the true interpretation of the time element of the Book of Revelation. Jonson here touches a real doctrine of the Anabaptists; but as a rule no attempt was made to distinguish them from the genuine Puritan.

In connection with these references to the various sects, it is interesting to see certain indications that the word methodical had begun in that early time to apply to religious scruples. As early as 1605, Mrs. Mulligrub, who appears as a Puritan with all a Puritan's antipathy to tobacco, and his innate tendency to knavery, assures us that on her sister's side she was a gentlewoman,³ "I can tell ye so methodically. Methodically! I wonder where I got that word? O! Sir Aminadab Ruth bad me kiss him methodically." This corresponds to the use made of other Puritan expressions—indicating, consequently, that "methodical" was a term designating preciseness in living. Similarly, one of Shirley's characters promises to become "as methodical an hypocrite" as the best of them.⁴ Brome, too, speaks of a "Methodicall, Grave and Orthographicall speaking

¹ *The Widow*, I, 2; *Law Tricks*, II, p. 33; *The Wedding*, I, 3; *Hey for Honesty*, V, 1.

² *News from the New World*, p. 342; also, *Staple of News*, III, 1.

³ *Dutch Courtesan*, III, 3.

⁴ *Grateful Servant*, II, 1.

friend," who pronounced never less carefully than people; and again of the "Act methodicall to sweare he loves you."¹ These usages are not quite so illuminating as the first; but they may help to show that the appellation had been waiting for Wesley and his followers long before that preacher rode over the highways of England.

In thus scrupulously searching out every branch of non-conformity, the attack of the actors centered naturally in those localities famed for their recusancy. English Banbury was one of the many places known to the dramatists for its intemperate tinkers and Puritan women.² And in London, as we already know, the most famous home of the sect was in Blackfriars. Bell Alley and Coleman Street were also mentioned for their congregations;³ but the church at St. Antholin's was best known to the players, where Mistress Flowerdew sat contentedly twenty times as long, "sleeping and all," as she could at a wearisome play.⁴ Save for the antiquarian interest in these local allusions, the references to the Puritan's cities of refuge have a wider interest. Amsterdam was earliest and most commonly known as such a place of shelter for these self-exiles, and on the stage it became the home of preaching cobblers, weavers, and zealots of all conditions. One of the customers of the mountebank, Forobosco, wished the conjuror to establish four new sects in that already over-populated city.⁵ What the characteristics of those sects should be he did not specify, since only the Devil could devise them; nor did he beg for their maintenance, since they were sure to be supported by the weavers, gingerbread makers and

¹ *Mad Couple*, I, 1; IV, 1. See also *The White Devil*, IV, 1.

² *London Chanticleers*, sc. 5; *Anything for a Quiet Life*, II, 1; *Gipsies Metamorphosed*; *The Wits*, I, 1.

³ *Hey for Honesty*, III, 3. Jonson's Justice Clement lived on Coleman St.

⁴ *Muses' Looking Glass*, II, 3; *Puritan*, V, 4; *Ordinary*, I, 5; *City Match*, IV, 5; *If you know not Me*, 2d part, p. 255; *News from Plymouth*, I, 1; *Roaring Girl*, I, p. 159.

⁵ *Fair Maid of the Inn*, IV, 2.

aquavitae men who thronged the city's troubled streets. For Amsterdam was universally known as the asylum of religious anarchy, playing the part in European history that Rhode Island once played here. So we hear the threat of Malipiero, disgusted with English selfishness:

Well, if I live, I will to Amsterdam,
And add another [sect] to the two hundred
Fourscore and odd.¹

Almost as familiar to the theater public was the city, Geneva, the home of the famous prints, the black-dressed weavers—in short, the antithesis of everything sprightly;² and to a less degree Rotterdam, on whose streets the fustian weavers, having been “smoked” out of England, as Dekker said, trundled their barrows.³ And of course the schismatics in these places were as vicious and depraved as the dramatists found them elsewhere.

Still more interesting, to Americans at least, are the allusions found to the Pilgrim Fathers. Some are mere passing references. In the *Witches of Lancashire* the irate father-in-law threatens to ship his son for New England unless immediate amendment came.⁴ Once it was the settlers' strictness that attracted a writer, and again their unconventionality in the use of the marriage ceremony.⁵ It was Cartwright, however, who maligned them most bitterly. In the *Ordinary*, two knaves, finding England too warm for them, with oaths of mutual fidelity planned to sail for

¹ *Gentleman of Venice*, III, 1. Other references, *Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, III, 2; *Anything for a Quiet Life*, II, 1; *The Witch*, I, 1; *Bird in a Cage*, IV, 1; *The Renegado*, I, 1; *The Court Beggar*, III, 1; *Covenant Garden*, IV, 2; *The Alchemist* with its Amsterdam parson; *Hey for Honesty*, IV, 1.

² *The Chances*, III, 1; also, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, p. 226; *Elder Brother*, IV, 4; *Fair Maid of the Inn*, II, 3; *The Masque of 1640*; *The Witch*, I, 1; *City Match*, V, 1; *News from Plymouth*, IV, p. 160.

³ *The Fawn*, II, 1; *If this be not a good Play*, V, end. For reference to weavers of Flanders see *News from the New World*, and *News from Plymouth*, IV, p. 170.

⁴ *Witches of Lancashire*, III, p. 214.

⁵ *City Match*, IV, 3; II, 2.

the colony.¹ Some concessions they saw would have to be made to the whims of the colonists; but these were of slight consequence, as the ensuing dialogue will show, and well worth the while to gain for them a home where good works were strictly prohibited.

- Hearsay. 'Tis but getting
A little pigeon-hole reformed ruff—
- Slicer. Forcing our beards into th' orthodox bent—
- Hearsay. Nosing a little treason 'gainst the king,
Bark something at the bishops, and we shall
Be easily receiv'd.
- Slicer. No fitter place.
They are good silly people; souls that will
Be cheated without trouble. One eye is
Put out with zeal, th' other with ignorance.

Surely Cartwright, the divine, knew little of the Pilgrim Fathers. They may have been distinguished by the cut of their beards or the shape of their ruffs; they may, too, have barked, if he wished to call it that, at the bishops; but never had they nosed treason against the king, or shown themselves, save under the hands of the playwrights, silly dupes. The high attainments of some of the New England pastors, and the whole history of the later resistance, shows the shallowness of Cartwright's estimate of their abilities.

Where dramatists had made no distinction between the Puritans and sects not really connected with them, it is not to be expected that they should distinguish, save in name, between the different branches of the Puritan party in England. In the *Parson's Wedding*, for example, Crop, the Brownist, appears on the stage to collect a debt of Jolly. He is kept at the door while the debtor tells scandalous stories of Crop's late Puritan wife, and then ignominiously hustled down stairs before he has more than half expressed his mind on the subject of idolatry, superstition and Bible texts.² Browne must have been a well-known person to

¹ V, 5.

² III, 5; also, *News from Plymouth*, IV, 170; *The Wits*, I, 2; and Taylor's *Hempseed*.

playgoers, for in one play mere reference to his home, Northampton, is considered sufficient by the author;¹ but the Brownist on the stage was merely one of the familiar type. The same reception was extended to the Presbyterian branch of the party. "We of our Ministry," said the Gipsy chaplain, "as well as those o' th' Presbyterie, take wives and defie Dignitie."² Nor was the Scottish church forgotten. We have already mentioned the mask performed in 1640, and its allusions to Knox. And while Ferdinand in *The Court Beggar* is feigning madness, he mistakes the doctor for a "thrifty Covenanter," and addresses him:³

Sir Presbeter
That can better pugnare than orare.

"The groaning wives of Edinburgh," and Archie, the court jester from Scotland and the avowed enemy of bishops, are each one remembered.⁴ Thus gradually the reader is led into the civil turmoil in those passages that concern the Petition of Right, the Committee-men, and the Commonwealth informers,⁵ and in them we see that the close of the quarrel is drawing nigh.⁶

¹ *City Match*, II, 2.

² *Jovial Crew*, II, p. 390; *Hey for Honesty*, IV, 1.

³ *Court Beggar*, III, 1.

⁴ *News from the New World*, p. 342; *Staple of News*, III, 1.

⁵ See, *Magnetic Lady*, III, 4; *Parson's Wedding*, p. 509; *Court Beggar*, V, 2; *Parson's Wedding*, IV, 1.

⁶ *Hey for Honesty* is a play containing many allusions to late historical events—for example, to Marston Moor, the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, the siege of Bristol, the Goldsmiths' Hall Committee, etc. But one of the characters is for the King and the Prayer Book still, which may indicate that it came out, in its first form, before the King's death.

CHAPTER 3.

REVIEW OF THE DRAMATISTS' REPLY.

After analyzing in this fashion the scores on which the Puritans were attacked, and gaining, it is hoped, a fair conception of the frequency as well as of the malignity of the stage's retaliation, we may perhaps be able to account for the demonstration. The dramatists were practical people with a living to earn, and although personal spite alone would have furnished a sufficient motive to attack, they would never have risked their prosperity to gratify it. Had these slaps at the Puritan not been popular, they would never have been indulged in. The people from whom the theater's habitués largely came, particularly in the closing years of the period, cared little enough for their natural enemies, the Puritans. It was not, however, the vulgar classes alone that delighted in this ridicule. To be sure, we read that in 1623 "The Spanish and French ambassadors were gratified with their reception at Cambridge, but declined the play, on being told that the argument was chiefly about a Jesuit and a Puritan."¹ But these dignitaries probably objected to the Catholic, rather than to the Puritan element of the play. At any rate, the immoral court of James I felt no personalities against itself in the gibes at the Precisians, and even in the more sober court of his successor the same style of play was popular. The supply, of course, followed the demand. In 1636 his Majesty was entertained during a visit at Oxford by a play entitled *The Floating Island*. It was written by William Strode, the University orator, and in its lyrical parts, for it approached a mask in character, was set to music by Henry Lawes.² The play makes dull reading now, but its significance for us is that it

¹ *State Papers*, 1623, p. 517.

² See the title page of the play, printed in 1655.

attacks the Puritans, if not in a very clever fashion.¹ The part of the Puritan is played by Melancholico, the Malcontent, who has much to say concerning the distress of the godly and the prosperity of the wicked, and who is led to marry the appropriately named Concupiscence by the following presentation of the joys of wedlock:

Then in her company
You have a world and more to contradict,
And in her Ear you may reform the church,
Or purg the State, as safe, as if you spake
Unto the Aire or whisper'd to your selfe.

The play is long and heavy; but if the audience at Oxford enjoyed the humor of Melancholico, and if such prominent men would join in its production, it is not strange that the London prentices and roarers found the more amusing plays of professional dramatists enjoyable. ✓

✓ The attack was continuous; and, after it had once gained its headway, except in the slight local color given by occasional mention of particular men or localities, we can trace no marked development in its course. The reply reached a white heat in the early years of James' reign—the best period of Jonson, Dekker, Middleton and their immediate contemporaries; and the allusions may even have been more numerous then than they later were. For, as will be shown, certain authors were later prominent whose plays, being largely romantic, had comparatively little to say of religious dissensions, and also certain others who cared little to draw from this storehouse of amusement. But of course many of the old plays were still given; the clowns still improvised;² and some of the most vigorous of the retorts came at the close of the period—those of Brome, Cartwright, Mayne and others. The edicts of closure, therefore, silenced a stage bitterly hostile to the party in power.

But the best of the satires came not in the last years of the drama. To construct a Puritan character well required a certain sort of genius, such as Jonson displayed in perfec-

¹ Especially, IV, 2; IV, 3; IV, 15.

² *The Antipodes*, II, 2.

tion. Randolph did it most happily, and also Mayne; but as a rule the latest attacks were not strong. The satire, for example, in the *Parson's Wedding* is not incisive. The commonplaceness of its Brownist figure has already been noted; and of the Parson's religious persuasions we are really left in doubt. He talks in a most shameless style, and is ignominiously fooled into marrying the Captain's mistress—one of the common experiences of the stage Puritan. Moreover, he is known for the pureness of his doctrine, and for his railing against the surplice; he is called "Abigail" and "Sir Oliver Mar-Text,"¹ and again a Marshall and a Case.² But in other ways his title seems doubtful. He wears the cassock;³ he gives his bride a wedding ring;⁴ and, most inconsistently of all, threatens to complain to the bishop of his ill treatment—the last person in the world whose aid the Puritan would think of seeking.⁵ Yet Killigrew evidently intended him for one. Probably neither he nor his audience cared for a consistent picture of their foe. All wants were satisfied by the disgraceful treatment of a person whose calling, at least, deserved respect; and if some foreign, un-Puritan matter was included, no one cared.

Another sign that the attack was weakening is found in *Hey for Honesty*. This must have been written in its present form after 1642;⁶ but it was probably first written before the closing of the theaters. Ananias Goggle, the Amsterdam parson of the play, in name and habitation is simply a copy of earlier caricatures, and the satire is a mere hodge-podge of what had preceded. He is a brother of extreme devotion, blessed with Biblical phraseology and the usual hatred of organs, crosses, surplices, big breeches and so forth. The author mentions even the reformed basket makers in their wicker pulpits—an unusual turn to the satire found in Randolph. But in lieu of any originality, the ridicule is disgustingly vulgar. The drama in this, as in other respects, was ready for the order of closure.

¹ p. 385, 516.

² p. 420. The two most prominent Presbyterian divines.

³ p. 381.

⁴ p. 417.

⁵ p. 478.

⁶ See above, p. 246, n.

If there was no marked change in the development of the satire itself when once it had fairly started, we can possibly note certain differences in each author's attitude toward the Puritans. Throughout the study we have said nothing of Shakspeare. His career began not long after the ending of the Martin Mar-Prelate war, and extended through the heat of the controversy; nevertheless in him we find little to remind us of Elizabethan religious dissensions or of the dramatic quarrels. Undoubtedly Shakspeare's plays contain many allusions to contemporary history; but neither in purpose nor achievement are his plays connected more with old England than with any other time. He was less concerned in mirroring the special features of his day than in portraying life in general, and therefore whatever references to the Puritans are found in him must be either by way of veiled allegory or incidental allusion.

A study of Shakspeare's plays, accordingly, for the purpose of finding definite allusion to the religious controversy of the 17th century, will not be fruitful. In the historical plays, many of England's great churchmen like Wolsey play their selfish parts till retribution overtakes them, and impostors are held up to scorn; but never do they seem to stand for a particular person, and never do they seem to speak Shakspeare's resentment against a particular cause. If his great characters were thus raised above the disputes of his day, it is not strange that the few definite allusions to the Puritans should be made with apparently no feeling. Undoubtedly, Malvolio is in conception a humour study in Puritan character, with the Puritan abhorrence of bear-baiting and the like, for which inclination Sir Andrew threatens to beat him. But Maria partly denies his affiliation with the party:¹ "The devil a puritan that he is, or any thing constantly, but a time-pleaser; an affectioned ass, that cons state without book and utters it by great swarths: the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look

¹ *Twelfth Night*, II, 3.

on him love him; and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work." The character, at any rate, lacks so much of the definite application of the true humour study, and of its realism, that from it we get no idea of the dramatist's real feelings toward the sect.

Yet infinitely more colorless are Shakspeare's chance allusions to the Puritans. Sir Andrew says, "I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician";¹ in *Winter's Tale* the clown finds "but one puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes";² and in *All's Well that Ends Well* it is again the clown who asserts, "Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart."³ In addition to these definite references, veiled allusions may be assumed. For example, Hunter finds in Malvolio's madness a satire on Puritan exorcism.⁴ And when we read, "These are the youths that thunder at a play-house and fight for bitten apples; that no audience but the tribulation of Tower-Hill, or the limbs of Limehouse, their dear brothers, are able to endure," the designation applied to the first locality, and the implication of some one's love of contention, suggest to us that Shakspeare had in mind two Puritan congregations known to his hearers.⁵ But even were we to interpret it in this way, it would be but another passing allusion to the Puritan party, throwing no light on Shakspeare's feelings toward them.

The majority of readers have stopped on arriving at this conclusion. Fleay, however, goes further. In his study of *Love's Labor's Lost* he finds a reason for Shakspeare's reticence.⁶ He regards the six main characters of that play as caricatures ridiculing the six most prominent anti-Mar-

¹ *Ibid.*, III, 2.

² *Winter's Tale*, IV, 3.

³ I, 3.

⁴ *New Illustrations*, I, 380.

⁵ *Henry VIII*, V, 4. See my note in *Modern Language Notes*, June, 1903, where I call attention to *The Wits*, IV, 2:

Our theatres are raz'd down; and where
They stood, hoarse midnight lectures preach'd by wives
Of comb-makers, and midwives of *Tower-wharf*.

⁶ *Anglia*, VII, 223-31.

tinists among the players. Lyly is represented by Amado, the euphuist, the lily-flower, the mint of words, the advocate of Spain, the late traveler to Rome. Cooper is pictured in Holofernes, the husband of the unchaste wife, the editor of Latin phrases, the quondam tutor, and, above all, the Judas—Martin's name for bishops. Greene is represented in Nathaniel, though but faintly, since he had died before the play's final revision. Nashe is found in Moth, the young Juvenal and ready pamphleteer; and Anthony Munday is hit off in Anthony Dull, the stage plotter and informer. If these six characters do not represent the six anti-Martinists, Fleay regards it as the most striking coincidence conceivable; and if they do, Shakspeare's later silence is explained. For having early in his career attacked the players, he could not consistently turn later upon the Puritans. This, Fleay feels, is the rational explanation of Shakspeare's silence.

This coincidence is certainly striking; but is its evidence needed to explain Shakspeare's position? In the earliest form of *King Henry IV*, the name of Sir John Oldcastle appeared in place of Falstaff. At the time, Shakspeare was ignorant that Oldcastle was the famous Lollard martyr, and that he, to the delight of the Catholics, was ridiculing a religious martyr. His attention was soon called to it. In the prologue of *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, Shakspeare's slur on the hero is resented in these words:

It is no pampered glutton we present,
Nor aged counsellor to youthful sin,
But one whose virtue shone above the rest,
A valiant martyr, and a virtuous peer.

Shakspeare saw his blunder. He changed the name of his character to Sir John Falstaff, and in the epilogue of *Henry IV, Part II*, offered his apology by disclaiming any reflection upon the hero—"For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man." If Shakspeare was thus unwilling even apparently to ridicule a Lollard, it is not unreasonable to

suppose that he would have been unwilling to mock, even in a general way, the Puritans of his own day.

If this reasoning be accepted, we have at once a basal explanation of Shakspeare's silence against the Puritans. Inconsistency was not unknown in this quarrel, and theater-goers would never have objected had Shakspeare turned on his former friends. The true reason, we believe, was temperamental. The poet may have thought of the sober-minded people of the Puritan party as he wrote:

These are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond ;
And do a wilful stillness entertain.¹

And his quiet answer to the Puritan ordering of life may be hidden in Sir Toby's response to Malvolio: "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"² This we believe is Shakspeare's response to the Puritans, unintentional as it may have been. Though perhaps his ideal of life allowed more pleasure than was permitted by others, he asked only tolerance for his own acts; and though this was not given, he never retaliated in a way that could cause offense to the Puritan.

Jonson's idea of the dramatic art was essentially different from Shakspeare's. In what was probably his earliest play, he renounced the romantic school of his day to portray:³

Deeds and language such as men do use,
And persons, such as comedy would choose,
When she would show an image of the times
And sport with human follies, not with crimes.

This conception of comedy brought him into the midst of the Puritan class for his material; for humours, he said,⁴ were the "root of all schism and faction both in church and commonwealth." He had little respect, we have seen, for the typical city magistrate, and not otherwise than as a conscious affectation could he comprehend the soberness of the Puritan demeanor. The zeal of the Puritans, especially

¹ *Merchant of Venice*, I, 1.

² *Twelfth Night*, II, 3,

³ *Every Man in his Humour*, Prologue.

⁴ *Magnetic Lady*, Induction.

of the women, seemed to him ridiculous; and the inconsistencies in their lives marked them as hypocrites. For one of Jonson's temperament could not understand why a man should not live up to his professions. Consequently, the satire in Jonson is as uproarious as that of any other dramatist; and, owing to his nature and method, it is more detailed and exact. But although the charges made by Jonson are serious, we can stand them better from him than from others. He treated the Puritan scruples against the stage in the most humiliating way; yet in his request to Selden for the exact meaning of the verse in Deuteronomy, we see that he gave his opponents' position thorough study, and that he actually believed it to be unfounded.¹ It may seem that in the heat of the attack, as he introduced one point after another in his thorough-going fashion, he forsook his ideal to sport with crime. But on comparing his satire with that of others, we notice that he never accused the Puritans of gross immorality. Hence, though he did charge certain ones with greed and theft, with no specific exclusion of the party as a whole, Jonson himself would probably say that he had not deviated from his ideal, and that the Puritan was the legitimate subject of his study.

There can be no doubt that Jonson was honest and sincere in what he did. He certainly was not pandering to the wishes of the vulgar; for his masks before the court show the same spirit as his comedies. What we believe to be his honest answer to the Puritan conception of life, untinged by either the wholesale mirth of Bartholomew Fair or the more scathing charges found elsewhere, is spoken in *The Sad Shepherd*. Robin Hood there calls on his mates to renew the woodland songs and dances of youthful June; but Clarion responds that the happy shepherds' days are gone, since:

The sourer sort
Of shepherds now disclaim on all such sport:
And say, our flocks the while are poorly fed,
When with such vanities the swains are led.

¹ See Part I, chapter 14, p. 156.

This is the Puritan aversion to Maygames; and we are surprised to find Jonson's answer given in words corresponding somewhat to the charge brought by Milton against the Episcopal clergy:

Would they, wise Clarion, were not hurried more
With covetise and rage, when to their store
They add the poor man's yeanling, and dare sell
Both fleece and carcass, not gi'ing him the fell!
When to one goat they reach that prickly weed,
Which maketh all the rest forbear to feed;

.
Or dig deep pits their neighbor's neat to vex,
To drown the calves, and crack the heifers' necks;
Or with pretence of chasing thence the brock,
Send in a cur to worry the whole flock.

Such a passage, in conjunction with two other serious allusions,¹ makes us feel that Jonson had earnest feelings against the Dissenters.

Yet although his feelings were so pronounced, and though his outspoken, blunt nature gave them full expression, Jonson's generosity, nevertheless, is apparent. In the *Discoveries* he wrote:² "Some controverters in divinity are like swaggerers in a tavern, that catch that which stands next them, the candle stick, or pots; turn everything into a weapon; oft times they fight blindfold, and both beat the air. . . . These fencers in religion I like not." On this account, he kept out of the theological side of the controversy, on which he had thought deeply; he refrained, also, from the grossest falsifications; and even his harshest charges are relieved by their humorous setting. Hence we take his satire more kindly than we otherwise should.

Though other dramatists showed just the same feelings, we find in no other place such a complete exposition of Puritanism as in Jonson. Chapman ridiculed it slightly in a gentlemanly way. Dekker's works abound in numberless allusions to the early Puritans, though delicate satire is wanting. Marston showed much the same spirit, evi-

¹ *Conversations*, pp. 32-3; *Discoveries*, no. XI. ² *Ibid.*, LXXXIX.

dently hating the type of Christianity exhibited in Puritanism. But they did not attempt to construct any great Puritan characters. In Middleton it is different. In general he wrote like a cultured gentleman without exaggeration, and with a more apparent moral aim than appeared in others. Yet when he came to a detailed picture of the class, which he attempted two, or perhaps three, times, if the *Puritan* be his, he wrote in a way lacking both the cleverness and the fairness of Jonson. For although all could indulge in mere gibes at the Puritans, it took skill to construct a complete and interesting Puritan character.

But were there none who refrained from attacking the Puritans? In Beaumont and Fletcher, in spite of many allusions, chiefly to Puritanical scruples against sports, no serious attack is found. Moreover, we find them also speaking lightly of Episcopal matters. They parodied irreverently the forms of the Prayer Book;¹ several times the litany is introduced; while Sir Roger, of *The Scornful Lady*, is a caricature of the curate of a great family, who, notwithstanding cassock and "reverend night cap," held no high place in the household.² Such allusions would have seemed irreverent to men constituted like the Puritan; and they show that these authors, though often turning to Puritan matters, were not bitterly set against any one religious body. Of course, had the players wished, it would have been impossible to have indulged in much satire against the Episcopacy. The court, which allowed all sorts of abuse to be heaped upon Dissenters, would permit no similar demonstration against its own worship.³ So what-

¹ *Scornful Lady*, IV, 2; *The Wild Goose Chase*, II, 3.

² IV, 2. Also *The Captain*, I, 1.

³ In 1639 the players of the Fortune were fined 1000 pounds for setting up on the stage an altar, basin, and two candlesticks, and bowing down to them. The actors alleged that it was an old play revived, and that the ceremonies represented were those of a pagan religion. But the authorities regarded it as a play in contempt of the ceremonies of the Church; and since the writer, but for lack of space, would have told what was said in regard to the altar, there may have been good ground for the opinion. *State Papers*, 1639, p. 140-1.

ever grudge the players felt against religion had to be gratified at the expense of the Puritan.

Other dramatists had still less to say of the religious parties. Ford was practically unconcerned. And Heywood, who had so sturdily defended plays, and who thrice replied to Prynne, did not indulge in needless side-shots at the Puritan. Furthermore, the respect for morality felt by both Shirley and Massinger restrained them from serious participation in the quarrel. Shirley, who was a Catholic, could have had no sympathy with Puritan ideas, yet his hatred is not strongly revealed. Many of his plays, to be sure, are romantic comedies; but even in the comedies of manners the references are slight, and, barring the address to Prynne, which Prynne was certainly not expected to see, of no great spirit. Massinger affords even less. In the *Roman Actor* he made a straightforward reply to Puritan feeling; but his moral earnestness, and his belief in the efficacy of practical religion in life, made him more tolerant of religious conduct. From these prominent writers of the late drama the reader may wish to assume that the reply to the Puritans ceased toward the end of the period. Then suddenly he comes upon Brome, Jonson's old servant, in whose London comedies is found all of Jonson's old vehemence expressed in the same spirit. He comes also to the attacks of Mayne and Cartwright, the former perfectly enjoyable, but the latter far from fair; and he sees that the church itself stooped to reply to its adversaries, and that the spirit of opposition was still rife among the players when the acts of closure came from Parliament in 1642.

The unfortunate thing about the dramatists' reply was that it was not discriminating. The Puritans as a class were open to satire on many minor points; some few, perhaps, were hypocrites and libertines; but unfortunately, the dramatists made no attempt to distinguish the good from the bad in their unqualified lampooning. How different this from the method of Molière's *Tartuffe*, that most bitter exposure of religious hypocrisy! The great French come-

dian accomplished his task in his customarily incisive and discriminating fashion. No more bitter and unrelenting embodiment of the hypocrite can ever be given than that of Tartuffe, who, under the veil of extreme sanctity, tempted his benefactor's wife, robbed him of his estate, and finally accused him falsely of treason to the king. Yet Molière showed perfect equipoise. Tartuffe's golden rule was "sinning in secret is no sinning at all"; but Cléante asked, 'Because a scoundrel has audaciously deceived you, under the pompous show of outward austerity, will you needs have it that every one is like him, and that there is no really pious man to be found now-a-days?'¹ Such discrimination was necessary. Molière's comedy is so wholly a picture of crime rather than of folly that some qualification is necessary to make it tolerable. The English comedian, however, did not follow this method. In the search for broad comedy, he forgot, or did not care, to make his work just. Even Jonson classed all Puritans together as hypocrites; and other dramatists, whose humor was less keen, and whose representations of vice were more unjust and unrelieved, like that of *The Family of Love*, exhibit at the worst this indiscriminating method.

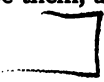
The dramatists were not alone in seeking to render all those marked for holiness and sobriety odious. Men of all conditions not only enjoyed their satire, but themselves accorded the Puritans the same treatment. This malevolent and indiscriminating spirit of the king's party in general is clearly described by Mrs. Hutchinson, and with the words of that lovable Puritan woman we close our review of the dramatists' satire of the Puritans:²

"If any, out of mere morality and civil honesty, discountenanced the abominations of those days, he was a Puritan, however he conformed to their superstitious worship; if any showed favour to any godly honest person, kept them company, relieved them in want, or protected them against violent or unjust oppression, he was a Puritan; if any gentle-

¹ IV, 5; V, 1.

² I, 114-5.

man in his country maintained the good laws of the land, or stood up for any public interest, for good order or government, he was a Puritan: in short, all that crossed the views of the needy courtiers, the proud encroaching priests, the thievish projectors, the lewd nobility and gentry—whoever was zealous for God's glory or worship, could not endure blasphemous oaths, ribald conversation, profane scoffs, Sabbath-breaking, derision of the word of God, and the like—whoever could endure a sermon, modest habit or conversation, or anything good,—all these were Puritans; and if Puritans, then enemies to the king and his government, seditious, factious hypocrites, ambitious disturbers of the public peace, and finally, the pest of the kingdom. Such false logic did the children of darkness use to argue with against the hated children of light, whom they branded besides as an illiterate, morose, melancholy, discontented, crazed sort of men, not fit for human conversation; as such they made them not only the sport of the pulpit, which was become but a more solemn sort of stage, but every stage, and every table, and every puppet-play, belched forth profane scoffs upon them, the drunkards made them their songs, and all fiddlers and mimics learned to abuse them, as finding it the most gameful way of fooling."



CONCLUSION.

Both sides of the famous controversy over the lawfulness of stage-plays have been heard; the strength and weakness of each has been seen, and perhaps some definite judgment can now be given. As we oppose the earnestness and moral purpose of the Puritan to the scoffing and sacrilege of the actor; the creditable, though at times intolerant, campaign of the one to the unjust and unfeeling, though frequently amusing, course of the other, whatever feeling we have of the soundness and justice of the Puritan cause is greatly strengthened by two pieces of evidence drawn from those times. In the first place, in spite of their careless attitude and bold words, we have good reason to believe that the actors saw the force of their opponents' arguments. After the heat of the Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy had abated, actors virtually admitted their folly. In spite of Nashe's affirmation that he knew not wherein actors had offended, unless "in purloining some hours out of Time's treasury that might have been better employed," he saw fit to promise a better play for the next time if in that one they had "trod awry, or their tongues stumbled unwittingly on any man's content."¹ Still more frankly do other plays admit the validity of the Puritan objection. Twice Lyly's prologues express the hope that no unseemly speeches stain his plays.² This is virtual admission that some plays had been licentious. In regard to other points of the Puritan attack, the old comedy *Wily Beguiled* practically confirmed Martin's story of the play-loving Bishop. There the clerk assured a man in regard to his coming marriage: "Faith, you may be asked i' the church on Sunday at morning prayer, but Sir John cannot 'tend to do it at evening prayer, for there comes

¹ Nashe, *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 1592, Epilogue.

² *Sappho and Phao; Gallathea. Contention between Liberty and Prudigality*, 1602.

a company of players to the town on Sunday i' the afternoon, and Sir John is so good a fellow that I know he'll scarce leave their company to say evening prayer; for, though I say it, he's a very painful man, and takes so great delight in that faculty, that he'll take as great pain about building of a stage or so, as the basest fellow among them."¹

This was just what ardent divines were saying of the desecration of the Lord's day. The enjoyment of the audience, likewise, in the obscenity of the theater, and the immorality of its surroundings, are several times admitted by Jonson.²

And lastly, at the end of the period, the actors' promise not to offend again, if allowed to reopen, is admission that they once had sinned. If actors and dramatists, who naturally perceived less evil in the theater than others, consciously or unconsciously gave this confirmation to the allegations of the opposite party, we see the justice of the Puritan cause.

Another striking proof that the English Puritan did not attack unfairly the vices of the theater is that in France, a country perhaps less given to Philistinism than England, a somewhat similar movement against the evil began at about the same time. We need not attempt to review the earliest opposition to the French mysteries, which naturally was more ecclesiastical than national. But a few of the facts as the mysteries gave place to the secular drama, and as modern theatrical conditions arose, are very significant for the student of the English movement.

Opposition in France to the sacred drama came really from three sources. The Protestants first objected to it because of its free, irreverent and even indecent use of Bible story.³ Henri Estienne was one to express these objections most vigorously.⁴ Immediately, the Catholics, hitherto rather unconcerned, were inspired with like dread, especially lest their plays should make the common people

¹ *Wily Beguiled*, Dodsley, p. 292.

² *Poetaster*, III, 1. See also his poem, *Come leave the loathed stage*, the sentiment of which Carew and Cleveland confirm.

³ *Les Mystères*, I, 428.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 441.

too familiar with the Bible, and should give opportunity for discussion of dogma. These were the religious objectors—originally and largely springing from the spirit of the Reformation.¹ Quite different was the opposition that came from the cultured classes, the feeling of disgust for the barbarism of the old national drama, and a desire for classical purity in structure and thought. This was the spirit of the Renaissance, which supplemented strongly the objections brought on religious grounds against the French theater.

The same influences turned also against the secular drama, which had been misused for political and religious purposes. The religious objection, however, was so much stronger at that time that the authorities, while satisfied with mere restraint of secular plays, forbade definitely, in 1548, and again in 1598, sacred performances.² Since the sacred drama did not die immediately with the act of 1548, maintaining a precarious existence by disguise of identity,³ the later opposition on grounds of morality, decency and social economy, concerned the sacred, as well as the secular, drama. In this transitional period, the spirit moving both the attackers and defenders of stage-plays is well illustrated in the *Remonstrance* of 1588 on the one hand,⁴ and in the words of the dramatist, Larivey, on the other.⁵ The unknown author of the *Remonstrance* called the king's attention to the evils of public plays on festival days and on Sundays, especially in the Hotel de Bourgogne, that "cloaque et maison de Satan." At the time, the Confrères were fighting hard to hold their own. His complaint was that on the stage the altar with its adornments, and priests in holy garb were represented to make of marriage a mockery, and that the text of the Gospel was irreverently used, so that holy things were profaned, and God blasphemed even

¹ Calvin seems to have yielded to the popular demand for stage-plays, but not willingly. Holl, p. 104.

² *Les Mystères*, I, 423-4, 441; Sainte-Beuve, p. 246; Darmesteter and Hatzfeld, p. 150-1; Rigal, p. 44; Holl, p. 22.

³ Sainte-Beuve, p. 274.

⁴ Rigal, pp. 42-4; 203.

⁵ Darmesteter and Hatzfeld, p. 181.

by religious orders. This was the main argument of the anonymous remonstrancer; but he did not forget the vice learned by idlers as they drank and gambled in the play-house, and the ruin that came to many women through associations there. Consequently his words were applicable as well to secular as to religious plays.

In addressing this remonstrance to the king as the one mainly responsible for the evil's existence, the author did not stand alone; all the preachers of Paris, he asserted, remonstrated against the abuses of the theater. And indirectly, Larivey, in defending at this time his profession against its traducers, admitted their numerical strength. Larivey's reply to these "carpers," that they were ignorant of the subject, sought to reveal to them the healthful influence of comedy. But he himself acknowledged that his aim was to be popular, and since to attain this he stooped to immorality, his arguments for the purity of the stage are seriously weakened.

That both the attack and the defense should correspond so closely in nature to the English conflict is not strange. The secular drama was open to just the same threefold objection that it was in England. If the plays were coarse and vile, so also were the lives of the players low, and the play-house the resort of idlers and criminals. In respect to the performers the situation was worse than it was in England; for women formed part of every company, to the increased scandal of the profession. The actors and actresses seem to have been an immoral lot; Tristan called them "debauchés"; Tallemant characterized the actors as sharpers, and the actresses as women of ill repute; and Claude le Petit spoke even less respectfully of them. Rigal admits that this view is not false.¹ England was not troubled in this way. But the character of the play-house and its audiences was exactly the same in both countries.² Even Bruscombille, says Rigal, when not defending his craft, complained of the disorderly conduct of the pages, footmen,

¹ Rigal, p. 166-7.

² Ibid., p. 203-16.

and rogues who assembled at the theaters. Some, like Ariste, who felt that a play in itself was no wrong, were forced into opposition by such disorders, convinced by the nature of the audiences of the immorality of the exhibitions.

Such was the character of the French theater during the first twenty or thirty years of the seventeenth century, and such were the opinions regarding it. It was a place avoided by great persons, and shunned by respectable women.¹ This was largely because of the rudeness of the early theater. Consequently, in France the opposition attempted a different solution than was reached in England. No Puritan party existed there, and those high in authority who perceived the evils of the art did their best to elevate rather than to suppress it.² The rulers, not the people, determined the drama's destiny. It was Corneille who set his fellows a good example; it was Louis himself who in 1640 passed restrictive measures forbidding things offensive to good morals; and above all it was Richelieu who worked to uplift the drama, and who encouraged his friend, Scudéry, to publish *L'Apologie du théâtre*—a strong plea for the supremacy of culture and refinement in place of the ignorance and vice that then ruled the national theater.³

But neither the vindications offered by Scudéry and Molière, in the preface to *Tartuffe*, nor legislative reforms, could silence the opposition to plays. In 1647 Arnaud de Conti published his attack, in which were reviewed all the edicts of ancient states and of the early church against the stage. And when in 1694 Bossuet issued the *Maximes et Reflexions sur la Comédie*, he affirmed, with the greatest possible conviction, that notwithstanding all measures to reform its abuses, the French theater, even in the greatest efforts of Molière, was still unholy and impure.⁴

This sentiment in France against the stage cannot be called Puritan; for among the people at large it had no

¹ Ibid., p. 214.

² Petit de Julleville, IV, 365.

³ Especially, pp. 1, 2, 16-27, 89-100.

⁴ Bossuet, XI, 156-80. Also XI, 148-54.

wide acceptance. Puritan feeling did not prevail. But that such a movement arose at all at the same time that it was growing in England; that in France the evil was admitted by kings, statesmen, and men of all ranks; and that there the corrective measures taken by *littérateurs* to purge the stage of its pollutions and to render it a moral force in the country failed, all goes to show that the Puritan movement in England was no outburst of prejudice or unfounded scruples, and that the absolute measures taken in 1642 were after all not without reason. Of course the English movement was colored with little Puritan scruples. Other peoples would have said less of the sinful ruffs and the vain attire of the players; France, at least, less of the text in Deuteronomy; and in other communities the plague would not have figured as it did in London. Nevertheless, the English movement was founded on solid ground.

The remarkable thing about the English attack was its popular character. In early Christian days the leaders of the church worked almost alone against the evil. In Spain, Mariana, backed by church sentiment and by an austere court, revived the Fathers' words; but he won no support from the people. And in France, though similar conditions drew forth similar objections, there was no Puritan class to support them. But in England the actual contest did not begin till in the soundest strata of society there existed a firm religious sentiment, and a love for morality sufficient to support and strengthen the anti-stage leaders who arose together from the ranks of the clergy, the legal profession and the laity. Moreover, the movement came when on other more important issues the Puritan party was being forced to assume a more marked and positive personality, and when religious persecution was driving the sweetness from their souls. Naturally, the dramatic quarrel, strong even of itself, shared these incentives to rapid growth.

The inclination is to speculate whether the Puritan party, had it remained in power, would ever have reopened the play-house. Personally we think that it would. To be

sure, the Puritan's development was from soberness to severity, as we see in the maturing years of Hutchinson and Milton. But if the party had remained long enough in power to forget the days of its persecution and ridicule, and long enough to grow used to rule, and so strong in it as to feel its power sure over the forces of disorder and lawlessness, its temper might possibly have softened. Under the leadership of such men as Milton, who was ready to plead for a strictly licensed theater, and who himself was able to embody from sacred story high art in dramatic form, the Puritan party might have ventured to reopen once more the play-house, though in a carefully guarded manner, and to return to a merry though chastened England. Such speculation, however, is idle. The Puritans had won their cause; on the whole they had fought for it well, struggling but the harder in the face of slander; and whatever our own feelings may be on the question of tolerating an art, which, in spite of inherent possibilities for good, has ever been a menace to good order and morality, we must admit that the Puritan was led to his position by the sense of public order and morality, and that his just sentence stopped the vileness of a rapidly deteriorating drama.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- The Actors Remonstrance or Complaint, 1643. In *The English Drama and Stage*.
- Acts of the Privy Council, 1542-1592. Lond. 1890-.
- Agrippa. *De Incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum*, Col. 1583.
- Alexander, *Anglus*. See Fabricius.
- Alley, W. *The Poore Mans Librarie*. Lond. 1571.
- Ames, W. *Conscience, with the Power and Cases thereof*. Lond. 1643.
- Andrewes, L. *The Pattern of Cathechistical Doctrine at Large; or A Learned and Pious Exposition of the Ten Commandments*. Lond. 1650.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. 3 vols. Aug. Taurin. 1581.
- Arber, E. *Introductory Sketch to the Martin Marprelate Controversy*. 1588-90. Lond. 1879.
- Arnaud, Prince of Conti. *Traité de la Comédie et des Spectacles*. Paris, 1647. Paris, 1881.
- Arnobius. *Adversus Gentes*. Edinb. 1871.
- Ascham, R. *The Scholemaster*. ed. Arber. Lond. 1870.
- Augustine. *Works*. 8 vols. N. Y. 1886.
- Baker, R. *Chronicle of the Kings of England*. Lond. 1733.
- Bayly, L. *The Practice of Piety*. Lond. 1792.
- Beard, T.; and Taylor, T. *Theatre of God's Judgements*. 1648.
- Beaumont and Fletcher. *Dramatic Works*. ed. Dyce. 11 vols. Lond. 1843.
- Becon, T. *Works*. 3 vols. Parker Soc. Cambr. 1843.
- Bodin, J. *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*. Lond. 1606.
- Bolton, R. *A Discourse about the state of true happinesse, in certaine sermons*. Lond. 1611.
- . *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God*. Lond. 1630.
- Bossuet, J. *Oeuvres complètes*. 12 vols. Paris, 1856.
- Bownd, N. *Sabbathum Veteris et Novi Testamenti*. Lond. 1606.
- Bradwardine, T. *De Causa Dei*. Lond. 1618.
- Brathwait, R. *The English Gentleman and the English Gentlewoman*. Lond. 1641.
- A Brief Relation of certain special and most material Passages and speeches in the Star-Chamber, occasioned and delivered, June the 14th, 1637, at the Censure of those worthy Gentlemen, Dr. Bastwicke, Mr. Burton, and Mr. Prynne. 1638. Harleian Miscellany. IV, 12.

- Brinsley, J. *The True Watch and Rule of Life.* 3^d ed. Part. Lond. 1622.
- Brome, R. *Dramatic Works.* 3 vols. Lond. 1873.
- Bucer, M. *Psalmorum libri quinque.* Geneva. 1554.
- Case, J. *Speculum Quaestionum Moralium in Universam Aristotelis Philosophi summi Ethicen.* Franc. 1604.
- Chapman, G. *Dramatic Works.* 3 vols. Lond. 1873.
- Chrysostom. *Works.* 6 vols. N. Y. 1889.
- Cleaver, R. *A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments.* By John Dod and Cleaver. Lond. 1612.
- Clement of Alexandria. *Writings.* 2 vols. Edinb. 1871.
- Cock Lorell's Bote. *Percy Soc.* vol. 6.
- Coke, E. *The Lord Coke, his Speech and Charge.* Lond. 1607.
- Collier, J. P. *History of English Dramatic Poetry.* Lond. 1831.
- *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn.* Lond. 1841.
- (ed.) *Registers of the Stationers' Company.* Lond. 1849.
- *Court and Times of Charles the First.* 2 vols. Lond. 1848.
- Coverdale, M. *Works.* 2 vols. Parker Soc. Cambr. 1844.
- Crashawe, W. *Sermon Preached at the Crosse, Feb. xliij.* 1607. Lond. 1608.
- Cyprian. *Writings.* 2 vols. Edinb. 1868–1869.
- Darmesteter and Hatzfeld. *Le Seizième Siècle en France.* Paris 1889.
- D'Avenant, W. *Dramatic Works.* 5 vols. Edinb. 1873.
- Davidson, C. *Studies in the English Mystery Plays.* N. H. 1892.
- Day, J. *Works.* ed. Bullen. 2 vols. Lond. 1881.
- Dekker, T. *Dramatic Works.* 4 vols. Lond. 1873.
- *The Seven Deadly Sins of London.* Arber Reprint. Lond. 1879.
- Dering, E. *Workes.* Lond. 1614.
- D'Ewes, G. *Autobiography and Correspondence.* 2 vols. Lond. 1845.
- Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne, in 1634 and 1637.* ed. S. R. Gardiner. Camden Soc. Lond. 1877.
- Dod, J. See under Cleaver.
- Donne, J. *Sermons.* 6 vols. Lond. 1839.
- Downham, J. *The Summe of Sacred Diuinitie.* Lond. (1630?)
- Dyke, D. *Two Treatises: The one of Repentance, The other of Christ's Temptations.* Lond. 1635.
- Ellis, H. *Original Letters.* Three Series. 11 vols. Lond. 1824–.
- The English Drama and Stage under the Tudor and Stuart Princes.* ed. Hazlitt. Lond. 1869.
- Fabricius. *Destructorium Viciorum.* fol. 1496.
- Fleay, F. G. *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama.* Lond. 1891.
- *Chronicle History of the London Stage.* Lond. 1890.
- *Shakespeare and Puritanism.* Anglia, VII, 223–31.

- Ford, J. *Dramatic Works*. 1 vol. Lond. 1840.
- G. J. (Greene). *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors*. Lond. 1615.
- G. T. (Gainsford). *The Rich Cabinet Furnished with Varities of Descriptions*. 1616. Extracts in *The English Drama and Stage*.
- Gosson. *An Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse*. ed. Arber. Lond. 1868.
- *Ephemerides of Phialo* (extracts), see above.
- *Playes Confuted in five Actions*. Lond. 1581. Reprinted in *The English Drama and Stage*.
- *The School of Abuse*. Shakespeare Soc. Lond. 1841.
- Great Britain. *Calendar of State Papers. Domestic Series*. Lond. Various dates.
- Greene, R. *Works*. Huth Library. Lond. 1881-6.
- *Dramatic Works*. 2 vols. Lond. 1831.
- Grindal, E. *The Remains of*, Parker Soc. Cambr. 1843.
- Guevara, Antonio de. *APXONTOPOLATION; or the Dial of Princes*; trans. by Thomas North. Lond. 1619.
- Halliwell-Phillips. *Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare*. Lond. 1874.
- *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*. Lond. 1886.
- Hanbury, B. *Historical Memorials relating to the Independents*. Lond. 1839.
- Harrington, J. *Nugae Antiquae*, 2 vols. Lond. 1804.
- Harrison, W. *Description of England in Shakspeare's Youth*. Lond. 1877. (Printed first in Holinshed's Chronicle.)
- Harvey, G. *Works*. Huth Libr. Lond. 1884.
- Henslowe, P. *The Diary of*, from 1591-1609. ed. Collier. Lond. 1845.
- Heywood, T. *An Apology for Actors*. ed. Collier. Lond. 1841.
- *Dramatic Works*. 6 vols. Lond. 1874.
- Histrio-Mastix; or *The Player Whipt*. In *Simpson's School of Shakspeare*.
- Holinshed. *Chronicles*. 6 vols. Lond. 1808.
- Holl, F. *Das Politische u. Religiöse Tendenzdrama des 16. Jahrh. in Frankreich*. Leipzig. 1903.
- Hone, W. *Ancient Mysteries Described*. Lond. 1823.
- Hurst, J. F. *History of the Christian Church*. 2 vols. N. Y. 1897.
- Hutchinson, R. *Works*. Parker Soc. Cambr. 1847.
- Hutchinson, Lucy. *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*. 2 vols. Lond. 1885.
- Jonson. *Works*. 9 vols. Lond. 1875.
- Kelly, W. *Notices Illustrative of the Drama, etc.* Lond. 1865.
- Lactantius. *Writings*. 2 vols. Edinb. 1871.
- Laneham, R. *Letter*. ed. Furnivall. Lond. 1890.

- Latimer, H. *Sermons and Remains*. 2 vols. Parker Soc. Cambr. 1845.
- Laud, W. *Autobiography*. (Diary.) Oxf. 1839.
- Lodge, E. *Illustrations of British History*. Lond. 1838.
- Lodge, T. *A Reply to Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse, in Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage Plays*. Lond. 1853.
- *An Alarum against Usurers*. See above.
- Lupton, D. *London and the Countrey*. 1632. Reprint in *Harleian Misc.*, IX, 310-31.
- Lyly, J. *Dramatic Works*. 2 vols. Lond. 1858.
- *Pap with a Hatchet*. Lond. 1844.
- Machyn, H. *The Diary of*. (1550-1563.) Lond. 1848.
- Mansi. *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova, et amplissima Collectio*. Florence, 1759.
- Manuscripts reprinted by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.
- Marsden, J. *History of the Early Puritans*. Lond. 1853.
- Marston, J. *Dramatic Works*. 3 vols. Bost. 1887.
- Martin Mar-prelate Tracts.
- Martin Marprelate, *The Epistle*. 1588.
- " " *The Epitome*. 1589.
- " " *The Minerall Conclusion*. 1589.
- Hay any worke for Cooper*. 1589.
- A Whip for an Ape*. 1589.
- Marre Mar Martin*. 1589.
- Martin Senior*. 1589.
- Pasquill of England, A Countercuffe given to Martin, Jr.* 1589.
- Marphoreus. Martin's Month's Mind*. 1589.
- The Protestatyon*. 1589.
- Pappe with an Hatchet*. 1589.
- Pasquill of England, his Return*. 1589.
- P. P. P. *Plain Perceval, the Peacemaker*. 1590.
- An Almond for a Parrat*. 1590.
- Theses Martinianae*. 1589.
- Martin Junior's Epilogue, to the above*.
- Maskell, W. *A History of the Martin Marprelate Controversy*. Lond. 1845.
- Massinger, P. *Dramatic Works*. ed. Cunningham. Lond. [No date.]
- Masson, D. *Life of John Milton*. 6 vols. Cambr. 1859-80.
- Middleton, T. *Works*. 8 vols. Bost. 1885.
- Milton, J. *Prose Works*. Bohn Libr. Lond. 1870.
- Nashe, T. *Works*. Huth Libr. Lond. 1883-4.
- Neal, D. *History of the Puritans*. 3 vols. Lond. 1837.
- Norden, J. *A Progress of Piety*. Parker Soc. Cambr. 1847.
- North, T. See Guevara.

- Northbrooke, J. *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine playes, or Enterludes with other idle pastimes, &c. commonly used on the Sabbath day, are reprobued by the authoritie of the worde of God and auncient Writers.* ed. Collier. Lond. 1843.
- Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond. Lond. 1842.
- Old English Plays. Dodsley-Hazlitt. 15 vols. Lond. 1874-6.
- Ordish, T. *Early London Theaters.* Lond. 1899.
- *Shakespeare's London.* Lond. 1897.
- Parker, M. *Correspondence of, (1535-1575).* Parker Soc. Cambr. 1853.
- Parnassus Plays. ed. Macray. Oxf. 1886.
- Peele, G. *Dramatic Works.* ed. Bullen. Bost. 1888.
- Perkins, W. *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience.* Lond. 1611.
- Petit de Julleville. *Les Mystères.* 2 vols. Paris, 1880.
- Plato. *Works.* trans. by Jowett. 5 vols. N. Y. 1892.
- The Players Petition to the Parliament. 1643. In *The English Drama and Stage.*
- A Poem against the Friars and Their Miracle Plays. *Reliquiae Antiquae.* I, 322-3.
- Pollard, A. W. *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes.* Oxf. 1890.
- Prynne, W. *Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge.* Lond. 1633.
- (Prynne) Mr. William Prynne, his Defence of Stage-Plays or A Retraction of a former Book of his called *Histrio-Mastix.* Lond. 1649.
- Lond. 1822. A forgery.
- Rainoldes, J. *Th' Overthrow of Stage-Playes.* 2d edit. Oxf. 1629.
- Rankins, W. *A Mirrour of Monsters wherein . . . is described the vices . . . caused by the sight of Playes.* Lond. 1587.
- Rawledge, R. *A Monster lately found out, or the Scourging of Tipplers.* Lond. 1628.
- Analytical Index to the Series of Records known as the *Remembrancia.* (1579-1664.) Lond. 1878.
- Ridley, N. *Works.* Parker Soc. Cambr. 1843.
- Rigal, E. *Le Théâtre Français.* Paris, 1901.
- Riley, H. T. *Memorials of London.* Lond. 1868.
- Rushworth, J. *Historical Collections.* (1628-1640.) Lond. 1721.
- Sainte-Beuve. *Tableau Historique et Critique de la Poésie Française et du Théâtre Français au Seizième Siècle.* Paris, 1838.
- Salvian. A second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters. London, 1580. In *The English Drama and Stage.*
- Sandys, E. *Sermons.* Parker Soc. Cambr. 1842.
- Schmidt, C. *The Social Results of Early Christianity.* Lond. 1889.
- Scudéry, Georges de. *L'Apologie du Théâtre.* Paris, 1639.
- Selden, J. *Opera Omnia.* 3 vols. Lond. 1726.
- Shirley, J. *Dramatic Works and Poems.* 6 vols. Lond. 1833.

272 *Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage.*

- A Short Treatise against Stage-Playes. 1625. In *English Drama and Stage*.
- Sidney, P. *Defense of Poesy*. ed. Cook. Bost. 1890.
- Simpson, R. *The Politics of Shakspeare's Historical Plays*. New Shakespeare Soc. Trans. 1874, p. 396-441.
- A Speech delivered in the Starr-chamber . . . at the Censure of John Bastwick, Henry Burton, and William Prynne:—by William, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his Grace. *Harleian Misc.* IX, 201-18.
- The Stage-Players Complaint*. 1641. In *English Drama and Stage*.
- Stationers' Registers*. Arber Reprint. 5 vols. Lond. 1875-94.
- Stow, J. *Annals, or, a general Chronicle of England*. Lond. 1631.
- *Survey of London*. Lond. 1842.
- Strype, J. *Works*. 25 vols. Oxf. 1822.
- Stubbes, P. *Anatomie of Abuses*. ed. Furnivall. Lond. 1877.
- *A Second Part of the Anatomie of Abuses*. See above.
- Tarleton, R. *News out of Purgatory*. Lond. 1844.
- Tatian. *Address to the Greeks*. Edinb. 1867.
- Traill, H. D. *Social England*. Lond. 1895.
- Twyne, T. *Phisicke against Fortune*. Lond. 1579.
- Letters and Papers of the Verney Family*. Camden Soc. Lond. 1853.
- Vives, J. L. *A very Fruteful and Pleasant Booke called the Instruction of a Christen Woman*. Lond. 1557.
- Webster, J. *Dramatic Works*. 1 vol. Lond. 1877.
- Whetstone, G. *A Myrrour for Magistrates of Cyties*. Lond. 1584.
- Whitgift, J. *The Defence of the Answer to the Admonition*. Parker Soc. Cambr. 1851-3.
- Wither, G. *Abuses stript and whipt*. Spenser Soc. Lond. 1871.
- Wood, A. *Athenae Oxon*. ed. Bliss. 4 vols. Lond. 1813.
- Wyclif, J. *Select English Works*. ed. Thomas Arnold. 3 vols. Oxf. 1869.
- (Wyclifite) *Sermon against Miracle Plays*. (14th century?) Reprinted in *The English Drama and Stage*; and *Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, 42-57.
- Yonge, W. *Diary*. (1604-1628.) Camd. Soc. Lond. 1848.

INDEX

- The Actors Remonstrance*, 185.
 Actresses, French, 148.
 Agrippa, 12, 47.
 Alley, 44-45, 54, 56.
 Alleyn, 108, 109, 124.
 Ames, 154, 156.
 Andrewes, 152, 155.
Anthony Babington's Complaint,
 112.
 Arnobius, 18, 24.
 Ascham, 45.
 Atkins, 174.
 Augustine, 17-18, 20, 173.
 Babington, 105.
 Bacon, 115, 188.
 Bayly, 106, 221.
 Beard, 106-7.
 Beaumont and Fletcher, 209, 212,
 213, 219, 222, 227, 228, 256.
 Becon, 43.
 Bede, 27.
 Bernard, 27.
 Blackfriars, Petitions of, 123, 151.
 Boden, 125.
 Bolton, 132.
 Bownd, 56, 106.
 Bradford, 39.
 Bradwardine, 31.
 Brathwait, 157, 174.
 Brinsley, 153, 156.
 Brome, 218, 225, 227, 236, 242.
 Bucer, 28, 39.
 Bullinger, 42.
 Burton, 179, 181-2.
 Busby, 182.
 Carew, 222.
 Cartwright, T., 39.
 Cartwright, W., 189, 213, 215, 221,
 222, 244, 257.
 Case, 94-5.
 Causes for Puritan hostility, 33-40,
 113-8, 146, 147-50.
 Chapman, 205, 212, 255.
 Chettle, 92.
 Chrysostom, 18-20, 164.
 Cicero, 174, 186.
 Clement, 16.
 Ecclesiastical censure of the drama,
 20-24.
Cock Lorell's Bote, 36.
 Coke, 131, 175.
 Controversial religious plays, 48-51.
 Cooke, 222, 239.
 Cooper, 203.
Covenant between God and Man,
 153.
 Cranley, 182.
 Crashaw, W., 131.
 Crowley, 39.
 Cyprian, 16, 21, 25.
 Day, 217.
Declaration of Lawful Sports, 147,
 227.
 Dekker, 111, 206, 207, 211, 219, 220,
 255.
 Dering, 43, 54.
 Dod, 132.
 Donne, 69, 188-9.
 Downham, 153.
 Dyke, 106.
 Dymock, 130.
 Fabricius, 28.
 Field, J., 104.
 Field, N., 138, 207, 214.
 Ford, 222, 257.
 Fox, 221.
 French attack on the stage, 261-5.
 Gager, 95-101.

- T. G. *Rich Cabnit*, 142-3.
 Gardiner, 38, 50.
 Gascoigne, 88.
 Gentili, 95-7.
 Giles, 153.
 Golding, 113.
 Gosson, 62-80, 81, 90, 102, 139, 162, 197.
 Greene, 110-11.
 Gresley, 175, 179.
 Grindal, 46, 54.
 Hall, 152, 153.
 Harrington, 91, 113.
 Harris, 162.
 Harrison, 35, 47, 54.
 Harvey, 91, 202.
 Hazlewood, 130.
 Henslowe, 108, 188.
Hey for Honesty, 246, 249.
 Heylyn, 148, 176.
 Heywood, 135-8, 223.
Histrion-Mastix: or, the Player Whipt, 134-5.
 Holinshed, 34.
Honest Excuses, 72-3.
 Horace, 13, 173, 186.
 Hutchinson, Lucy, 147, 195, 258-9.
 Hutchinson, Bp. 43.
 John of Salisbury, 27.
 Jonson, 36, 128, 156, 208, 211-12, 217, 219, 221, 226, 227, 230, 234, 237, 238, 241, 253-6.
 Kemp, 199-201.
 Killigrew, 239.
 Knewstubs, 105.
 Lactantius, 16.
 Lake, 133.
 Lamb, 182.
 Laneham, 51-2, 102.
 Latimer, 42.
 Laud, 160, 162, 175-7.
 Legislation on the stage, 40-2, 119-125, 128-9, 146, 184.
 Lodge, 62, 73-9, 121, 126.
 Lucy, 108.
 Lupton, 156.
Lusty Juventus, 49.
 Lyly, 38, 203, 205, 260.
 Machyn, 37.
 Marlowe, 187.
 Marston, 239, 242, 255.
 Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy, 114-6, 119, 195-204.
 Massinger, 216, 224, 231, 257.
 Mayne, 215, 222, 257.
Merry Devil of Edmonton, 220.
 Methodist, 242.
 Middleton, 207, 214, 218, 229, 230, 236, 238, 240-1, 256.
 Milton, 33, 53, 161, 163, 181, 189, 224.
 Molière, 257, 264.
 Munday, 68, 86-7, 200, 201.
 Nashe, 84-5, 89-90, 116, 197-203, 260.
New Custom, 49.
Newes from the North, 67.
 Newton, 86.
 Norden, 106.
 North, 47, 54, 56.
 Northbrooke, 43, 54-61, 62, 65, 102, 111.
 Noy, 172, 175, 180.
 Pammachius, 47, 50.
 Parker, 48, 54.
The Parson's Wedding, 249.
 Penry, 202.
 Perkins, 106.
 Pierce, 183.
 Plato, 11, 18, 24.
Pilgrimage to Parnassus, 201-2.
The Play of Plays, 75-6.
 Plutarch, 12, 173.
Practise of Christianitie, 153.
 Private plays, 56, 58, 81, 93-101, 105, 141, 170, 182, 190.
 Prynne, 28, 101, 155, 159-178, 222.
The Puritan, 210, 229, 237.
 Puritan literature, Satire on, 220-3.
 Puritan localities, 243-6.

- Puttenham, 91.
 Rainoldes, 56, 95-101, 141, 182.
Ralph Roister Doister, 42.
 Randolph, 214, 226, 233, 246.
 Rankins, 88-9.
 Rawledge, 144.
 Read, 182.
Refutation of the Apology for Actors, 138, 139, 142.
Parnassus Plays, 112-13, 201.
 Ridley, 43.
 Roe, 156.
Sacke full of Newes, 37.
 Salvian, 18.
 Sandys, 43.
 Scottish theater, 149-50.
A Second and Third Blast, 68-71.
 Selden, 156, 180, 231.
 Shakspeare, 170, 187, 196, 250-3.
 Shirley, 219, 223, 225, 242, 257.
Shorte Treatise, 143-4.
 Sidney, 12, 90-1.
 Spark, 104.
 Spenser, 53, 189.
Stage-Players Complaint, 185.
 Stockwood, 103.
 Stow, 108, 118, 156.
Strange News out of Affrik, 72.
 Strode, 247.
 Stubbes, 80-5, 113, 139, 162, 222.
 Sutton, 138.
 Tarleton, 92, 109, 196.
 Tatian, 13.
 Tertullian, 13-16, 18, 21, 24, 25.
Treatise of Daunses, 86.
Triumph of Peace, 179-181, 183.
 Twyne, 113.
 Tyndal, 43.
Vox Graculi, 154.
 Wager, 42.
 Webbe, 91.
 Webster, 229.
 Whetstone, 87, 105.
 White, 103.
 Whitelock, 176, 179.
 Whitgift, 39.
Whore New Vamped, 147, 209.
 Wigginton, 202.
 William of Wadington, 31.
 Willis, 182.
Wily Beguiled, 260.
 Wither, 138, 222.
 Wyclif, 32.
 Wycliffite sermon, 34.
 Wylley, 48.
 Xenophanes, 11.
 York, 146.

YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH.

ALBERT S. COOK, EDITOR.

- I. The Foreign Sources of Modern English Versification. CHARLTON M. LEWIS, Ph.D. \$0.50.
- II. Ælfric: A New Study of his Life and Writings. CAROLINE LOUISA WHITE, Ph.D. \$1.50.
- III. The Life of St. Cecilia, from MS. Ashmole 43 and M.S. Cotton Tiberius E. VII, with Introduction, Variants, and Glossary. BERTHA ELLEN LOVEWELL, Ph.D. \$1.00.
- IV. Dryden's Dramatic Theory and Practice. MARGARET SHEERWOOD, Ph.D. \$0.50.
- V. Studies in Jonson's Comedy. ELISABETH WOODBRIDGE, Ph.D. \$1.50.
- VI. A Glossary of the West Saxon Gospels, Latin-West Saxon and West Saxon-Latin. MATTIE ANSTICE HARRIS, Ph.D. \$1.50.
- VII. Andreas: The Legend of St. Andrew, translated from the Old English, with an Introduction. ROBERT KILBURN ROOT. \$0.50.
- VIII. The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems. CHARLES GROSVENOR OSGOOD, Ph.D. \$1.00.
- IX. A Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances dealing with English and Germanic Legends, and with the Cycles of Charlemagne and of Arthur. ANNA HUNT BILLINGS, Ph.D. \$1.50.
- X. The Earliest Lives of Dante, translated from the Italian of Giovanni Boccaccio and Lionardo Bruni Aretino. JAMES ROBINSON SMITH. \$0.75.
- XI. A Study in Epic Development. IRENE T. MYERS, Ph.D. \$1.00.
- XII. The Short Story. HENRY SEIDEL CANBY. \$0.30.
- XIII. King Alfred's Old English Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies, edited with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary. HENRY LEE HARGROVE, Ph.D. \$1.00.
- XIV. The Phonology of the Northumbrian Gloss of St. Matthew. EMILY HOWARD FOLEY, Ph.D. \$0.75.
- XV. Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry by Plutarch and Basil the Great, translated from the Greek, with an Introduction. FREDERICK M. PADEFORD, Ph.D. \$0.75.
- XVI. The Translations of Beowulf: A Critical Bibliography. CHAUNCEY B. TINKER, Ph.D. \$0.75.
- XVII. The Alchemist, by Ben Jonson: edited with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary. CHARLES M. HATHAWAY, JR., Ph.D. \$2.50. Bound in cloth, \$3.00.
- XVIII. The Expression of Purpose in Old English Prose. HUBERT GIBSON SHEARIN, Ph.D. \$1.00.
- XIX. Classical Mythology in Shakespeare. ROBERT KILBURN ROOT, Ph.D. \$1.00.
- XX. The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage. ELBERT N. S. THOMPSON, Ph.D. \$2.00.

YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

ALBERT S. COOK, EDITOR

XX

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN
THE PURITANS AND
THE STAGE

BY

ELBERT N. S. THOMPSON, PH.D.

Instructor in English in Lehigh University

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Yale University in Candidacy for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy



NEW YORK

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1903







[REDACTED]

1

1951

9

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



3 9015 03122 0034

**DO NOT REMOVE
OR
MUTILATE CARD**

